

1264  
+ last  
DISCOURSES,

ESSAYS, and TRACTS,

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS:

V I Z.

The rational Foundation of a christian Church.

A new Essay on civil Power in Things sacred.

The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind.

An Essay on the Freedom of Will in GOD and in Creatures.

The christian Doctrine of the Trinity.

Seven Dissertations on the Trinity.

Useful and important Questions concerning JESUS the SON of GOD freely proposed, and answered.  
And,

The Glory of CHRIST as GOD-MAN displayed.

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By the late Reverend and Learned

I S A A C W A T T S, D. D.

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V O L. VI.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for T. and T. LONGMAN at the Ship, and J. BUCKLAND at the Buck, in Paternoster Row; J. OSWALD at the Rose and Crown in the Poultry; J. WAUGH at the Turk's Head in Lombard-Street; and J. WARD at the King's Arms in Cornhill. MDCCLIII.





T H E  
C O N T E N T S  
O F T H E  
S I X T H and last V O L U M E.

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**T H E**  
**RATIONAL FOUNDATION**  
**OF A**  
**CHRISTIAN CHURCH,**  
And the TERMS of  
**CHRISTIAN COMMUNION.**

To which are added

**T H R E E D I S C O U R S E S,**

**V I Z.**

**DISCOURSE I.** A pattern for a dissenting preacher.

**DISCOURSE II.** The office of deacons.

**DISCOURSE III.** Invitations to church-fellowship.

**Vol. VI.**

**b**



THE  
RATIONAL FOUNDATION

OF A  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

AND THE  
CHRISTIAN COMMUNION

TO WHICH ARE ADDED  
THREE DISCOURSES

BY  
V. L. L.

DISCOURSE I. A Lecture for a Christian as pre-  
pared to enter the office of deacon.  
DISCOURSE II. The office of deacon.  
DISCOURSE III. Advantages to church-fellowship.

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T H E

## P R E F A C E.

**T**HE principles on which christian churches are built, are so plain, so natural and easy, and so much the same with those which give rise to all the well-formed societies in the world, that one would think there should not be such matter of debate and controversy among christians, upon these subjects, as we have unhappily found.

For besides the reasonableness of the things that are required for this purpose, our blessed Saviour himself has given us so many promises in his word to favour this practice of holy fellowship, and to encourage our hope, as give abundant reason to our expectations of divine success. Has he not told us, that "where two or three are met together in his name, there he is, or will be in the midst of them?" *Matth. xviii. 20.* And when *St. Peter* made a glorious confession of his faith in *JESUS* the Son of God, the promised Saviour; upon this rock, said he, will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

So that if there is found but such faithfulness, such christian virtues of meekness, patience and forbearance, as may be justly expected among christians, I would hope such settlements as these might continue without interruption. And I trust I have here represented these things so faithfully, so plainly and clearly, that no single person, in any part of his practice, will find his conscience imposed upon by any article or canon here mentioned; nor will any society find itself obliged to do any thing in receiving, continuing, or excluding any persons from their church, but what lies natural and easy before the minds of persons, who do but exercise the common reason by which they conduct themselves in the affairs of human life.

Nor is there any thing here asserted, which confines christians to so exact an uniformity in their principles and practices, but by the exercise of their reason, with a small degree of charity, they may make and allow such alterations, as will assist and promote the general peace and edification of the churches, under the care and patronage of *JESUS* the great shepherd.

And



And upon these foundations, if the grace of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and his Spirit, which is promised to assist the christian church, does but continue among his ordinances, from time to time, we may hope to find a comfortable succession and increase of members added to the church, and built up in faith, love and holiness, till our Lord JESUS CHRIST himself shall return to this world, and finish the great and important work of judgment.

I would only add further, with regard more especially to the questions relating to christian communion, that if any thing contained in them may be effectual through the divine blessing, to set the terms of christian-fellowship in a juster light, to secure the great and necessary principles of christianity, to remove any causes of offence from among the churches, and to lead the several parties of christians, to more moderate and charitable sentiments concerning each other, I shall have abundant reason to rejoice in my attempt, and give glory to the God of truth and peace.

Stoke Newington,  
March 25, 1747.

THE

**THE**  
**Rational FOUNDATION, FORM, and ORDER**  
**OF A**  
**CHRISTIAN CHURCH,**

**Confirmed and improved :**

**BY THE**

**Directions and examples of the NEW TESTAMENT.**

**SECTION I.**

*Reason and revelation agree to require social religion.*

**I.** **M**AN is an intellectual and sociable being, and he owes honour and worship to God his creator, in his social as well as his single capacity: He owes also assistance to his fellow-creatures, in the affairs of religion, as well as in those of the natural and civil life. Social religion is therefore the duty of every man, where he can meet with such fellow-worshippers, as to lay a foundation for amicable union in the same acts of worship, and for mutual help in religious concerns: And these three following reasons, among others, oblige him to it.

1. As he is bound to express to God in secret, and alone, what sense he has of the divine being, attributes, and government, so he is obliged to join with others, and publicly to declare to the world, what an awful and honourable apprehension he has of the same things: And this, that he may do honour to God amongst men, or glorify his name amongst his fellow-creatures; which secret religion cannot do. This is the chief end with regard to God, for which man's very nature is made sociable, and for which he is constituted by providence in human society. This is the first spring, and the perpetual foundation, of all social and public religion: For this end, social honours paid to God shall be everlasting. This is practised



tified in the society of holy angels, those "sons of God, who sang together, and shouted for joy, when the foundations of the earth were laid; and who met together at certain seasons, to present themselves before God." *Job xxxviii. 7. and i. 6. and ii. 1.* This is required in our world of sinful men; so it will be, doubtless, in the world of separate spirits, who are described as a church, or religious assembly. *Heb. xii. 13.* And so in the world of the resurrection, when the high praises of God and the lamb shall be for ever on their tongues.

2. Man, in his single capacity, is obliged to perform acts of secret religion to God, because, in that capacity, he wants many favours from God; such as health, safety, food, raiment, &c. He is always receiving some of these favours, and always waiting for more. And so also every man, in his social capacity, for the same reason, is under obligation to perform acts of public or social religion; viz. prayer for public mercies wanted, such as good governors, peace, plenty, civil and religious liberty, &c. praise for public mercies received, and a profession of his hope of public blessings, which he expects at the hands of God. If there were no other reasons for social religion to be found, yet I think the obligation of it would stand firm upon these two pillars. But I add,

3. It is a necessary and most effectual means of maintaining religion in this our world. Several persons, with united zeal, counsel, and strength, can do much toward the encouragement and assistance of each other: The elder, and more knowing, may instruct the ignorant; and all may strengthen each other's hands in the things of God and godliness. They may defend each other against injuries, reproaches, and the shame of singularity, and join in all proper practices to keep a sense of divine things lively and warm at their own hearts, and to excite others to the same practices of piety and goodness. Thus social religion appears with evidence to be the duty of mankind.

II. There are but two ways whereby God teaches us religion; that is, by the light of nature, which he has planted in men, and the light of revelation, which, in various ways, and in different ages of the world, he has communicated to men. And accordingly, religion is distinguished into natural and revealed. By each of these methods of teaching, men may be instructed in social as well as personal godliness, and learn to perform the several parts and duties of it, according to their different extent of instruction.

As revealed religion in general acknowledges natural religion for its foundation, so all the parts of social, as well as personal religion, whether doctrine or duty, worship or order, so far as they are revealed and prescribed in the word of God, are still founded on principles of natural light and reason. Whatsoever therefore revelation has added, is but some positive or supernatural structure upon that foundation, without the opposition or contrariety to any parts thereof; for it is God himself that teaches us by the light of nature and reason; and we can never suppose that, by revelation, he will give us instructions which are contrary to the very principles of reason, and to those fundamental lessons of religion which he has written in our natures.

Human reason is the first ground and spring of all human religion. Man is obliged to religion because he is a reasonable creature. Reason directs and obliges us not only to search out and practise the will of God, as far as natural conscience will lead us, but also to examine, receive, and obey, all the revelations which come from God, where we are placed within the reach of their proper evidences. Wherein-  
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foever revelation gives us plain and certain rules for our conduct, reason itself obliges us to submit and follow them. Where the rules of duty are more obscure, we are to use our reason to find them out, as far as we can, by comparing one part of revelation with another, and making just and reasonable inferences from the various circumstances and connexions of things. In those parts or circumstances of religion where revelation is silent, there we are called to betake ourselves to reason again, as our best guide and conductor. And let it be observed, that there are many instances also, wherein we are instructed to pay the same honours to God, and fulfil the same duties to men, in the practice of public as well as private religion, both by the light of reason and the light of revelation: For God, who knows the weakness of our intellectual powers, has been graciously pleased to give us a shorter, plainer, and easier discovery of many rational and moral truths and duties by revelation, which would have been very tedious and tiresome, as well as much more difficult, for the bulk of mankind, to have ever found out and ascertained by their own reasonings.

III. When we have received upon just evidence the new testament, as a revelation sent us from heaven, then our own reason and conscience oblige us to search in these writings, what new doctrines God has there proposed to our faith, and what new duties to our practice. And here, in our search after the things that relate to our personal religion, we shall find several sublime and glorious truths to be believed concerning the blessed trinity, the Father, the Son and the holy Spirit; and almost all the oeconomy of our salvation revealed to us, above and beyond what the light of reason can ever discover, or so much as surmise. We shall here find also the duties of faith, in the name, and blood, and righteousness, of the Son of God, for the pardon of our sins, and the justification of our persons; hope in his resurrection; subjection to his government; offering up our addresses of prayer and thanksgiving to God the Father, in his name; seeking the influences of the blessed Spirit, to sanctify our souls; waiting for the return of *Christ* from heaven, and for our own resurrection to eternal life. All these, I say, we shall find revealed and prescribed, over and above the duties discovered by reason. And besides these, we have the institution of the two sacraments, to be ever celebrated by christians, as memorials and pledges of some of those duties and blessings.

And it is not at all to be wondered at, that the gospel should require of us the additional belief and practice of such doctrines and duties in our personal religion, as the light of nature knows nothing of; because the very design of the gospel was to restore sinful man to the favour and likeness of God, which the light of nature, or the law of natural religion, could not do: The nations of the earth, and the men of the brightest reason among them, in long successions of ages, had made sufficient experiments of the practical insufficiency of human reason for that divine purpose.

But when we come to enquire what rules *Christ* has laid down for our conduct in social religion, distinct from these evangelical doctrines and personal duties, here we shall find far the greatest number of the same things which are prescribed to us by the holy scripture, or at least represented as the practices of the apostles and primitive christians, to be also prescribed by the light of nature; we shall find them to be such practices, or rules of conduct, as upon the supposed revelation of the christian doctrine and sacraments, human reason and prudence would, for the most part, lead us to perform.

And we may take notice by the way, that the chief peculiarities of the gospel in faith and practice, so far as relates to our personal religion, are much more plainly



and expressly dictated to us in scripture, by way of direct and explicit revelation and command; whereas the affairs that relate only to social religion, excepting the sacraments, are, for the most part, hinted to us in a way of narrative, and are to be drawn out by inferences; wherein much more is left to the exercises of our own reasoning powers, than in the matters of personal faith and practice.

IV. I would ask leave to observe here, that it is a fashionable and modish thing now-a-days, to represent the whole religion of *Christ*, whether personal or social, as little more than the mere religion of nature, revised and reformed from the corruptions of the sinful and degenerate nations, both *jewish* and *gentile*; which opinion I can never assent to, so far as it regards the peculiar evangelical and glorious truths and duties, which relate more immediately to our personal religion, to our salvation and eternal life in the world to come: Yet, in matters that relate to the constitution and government of christian churches, whose chief design is to hold forth and maintain our religion publicly and visibly in this world, I am not afraid to say, that there is a most happy correspondence and similarity between the dictates of the light of nature, and the prescriptions of the new testament almost all the way.

In this affair revelation does not add a great deal of new duty beyond what reason would teach us, as very proper to maintain natural religion in the public profession of it. This will sufficiently appear in the following particulars.

## S E C T I O N II.

### *Instances of the agreement of reason and revelation in social religion.*

I. **W** Heresoever public and social religion is to be maintained, the light of reason teaches us, that several persons, who profess the same religion, must sometimes meet together, to celebrate the solemnities, rites, and ordinances thereof, and to worship God according to the rules of it. When this religion is professed by great multitudes, or by whole nations, it is not possible they should all be convened together in one place, so as to join frequently in the same acts of worship, to offer their united prayers or praises to God, in a regular and rational manner, and with conveniency and edification to such a vast assembly. In such a case therefore, it is necessary, that they should be separated into distinct societies, for the same purpose.

And does not the new testament sufficiently indicate these things to us, as relating to the social religion of christians? Do we not find them frequently met together in the history of the *Acts* of the apostles; that "with one mind and one mouth they may glorify God, even the Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*;" as in *Rom. xv. 6*. Are not such assemblies continually mentioned and encouraged in the epistles? And are not christians exhorted to maintain this custom, and "not to forsake the assembling of themselves together?" *Heb. x. 25*. Do we not find the christian converts of the same country divided into particular congregations, which are called churches, who meet together for this purpose? The church at *Corinth*; the church at *Philippi*; the churches of *Galatia*: *1 Cor. xvi. 1*. The seven churches of *Asia*: *Rev. i. 11*. All the churches of the saints. *1 Cor. xiv. 33*.

II. The light of nature and reason teaches, that where persons join together for any religious service, they must be agreed in the main and most important points that relate to it. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" *Amos iii. 3*.

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sect. II. Reason and revelation agree in social religion.

For otherwise perpetual jarring and confusion of opinions and practices would arise in the very worship itself, which would destroy all the delight, the harmony, and decency of it. A worshipper of the true God cannot join in natural religion with a worshipper of idols.

And yet, it is not every little difference in sentiment and opinion about the true God, or his worship, that is sufficient to exclude persons from the same religious society, where their agreement is so great, as that the chief ends of public worship may be happily maintained. Therefore *Abraham* and *Melchisedec* might join in the same worship of the one true God, though *Abraham* was taken into a peculiar covenant with special promises, and *Melchisedec* practised religion upon the ancient principle and dispensation of his father *Noah*. *Gen.* xiv. 18, 19, 20, 22. So *Abraham* worshipped God with *Abimilech*, the king of the *Philistines*, upon the same general principle, and they made a covenant, and swore together by the true God. *Gen.* xxi. 22—31.

And does not the new testament teach us the same practice, viz. that where persons would be united in christian worship and religious society, they must agree in their religion so far at least, as to make a credible profession of their being the sincere disciples of *Christ*, and must make known their agreement in all the necessary principles of christianity\*. They must profess not only the one true God, but faith in *Jesus Christ*, the Lord, in his most important characters and offices, together with such repentance of sin, and such a visible practice of holiness, as may give reason to hope their profession is sincere. In the primitive times they “confessed their faith, and then shewed their works,” *Acts* xix. 18. and thereby proved their profession to be sincere, and their faith to be a “true or living faith.” *James* ii. 17, 18. It was commanded that the “*Jews* should bring forth fruits meet for repentance,” in order to be admitted to *John*’s baptism. *Matth.* iii. 8. And surely then it must be required to the baptism of christianity, or an union with the disciples of *Christ*†. They are generally described to be such as worship God, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord, and profess that faith which worketh by love; which is the substance of christianity in a very few words.

And though there are, and will be, some lesser differences in sentiment among christians in all ages, and though they are as great as were between the *jewish* and the gentile converts in primitive times; yet the new testament teaches, that they may all unite in the same christian society, and “receive one another in the Lord; that is, to all the privileges of fellow-christians, and the fellowship of gospel-ordinances, even upon as large a foot as *Christ* has received them.” *Rom.* xiv. 3. and xv. 7. Whether they are strong or weak in the faith, they are to be thus received, without entangling their minds “with more doubtful and disputable things;” *Rom.* xiv. 1. that is, whether they eat herbs or flesh, or believe “some days were holy, or every day alike.” verses 3—5.

III. Again, The light of reason teacheth, that there must be a mutual consent, compact, or agreement, amongst such persons as profess the same religion, to walk according to the directions and dictates of it, and to assist and encourage, to join

\* Here it is not proper to divert so far from my subject, as to enter into a debate, how many of the christian doctrines are of absolute necessity to make a disciple of *Christ*, or a true christian: This is an endless controversy, according to the different opinions of men.

† Let it be observed, that in this, and other parts of my discourse, I speak only of adult persons, who are capable of professing their faith; being not willing to embarrass this discourse with the controversy relating to infants, their discipleship, or their baptism.



and support one another, in the profession and practice of it, as well as to meet and worship together at certain seasons, and a certain place. This engagement for mutual assistance is very necessary, for the support of any religion in the world; and without such an agreement as to time and place, a company of men cannot meet for any purpose whatsoever, either in things civil or religious\*.

If there be any precise time, and any particular place, appointed for this purpose by divine revelation, reason immediately determines that we must meet at that time and that place: But where there is not any such divine direction, there the place and time must be concerted and agreed by those who are united in such a society; nor has any one person power to impose his will or humour upon the rest. The acts of religion must be all free and voluntary.

Now what saith the new testament in this case? The union, or mutual agreement among particular christians for this purpose, which is the bond of their society, is expressed by St. Paul, or, at least, it is included in that phrase "of receiving one another, as Christ has received us;" *Rom. xv. 7.* "that with one mouth we may glorify God." It is a mutual receiving one another "in the Lord." *Rom. xvi. 2.* The word is used to the same purpose, *Rom. xiv. 1.* and in other scriptures. If this agreement be not expressed so plainly in scripture as some persons might expect, it is because the very nature of things, and the reason of man, makes this mutual consent and agreement so necessary to keep up any public religion, that it was not needful for the scriptures to be more express or particular in the appointment of it.

As for the place of worship, there is none made sacred, or divinely appointed, under the new testament. *John iv. 21—24.* "Neither in this mountain, Gerizim, nor at Jerusalem, shall they worship the Father; but the hour cometh, and now is at hand, when, without regard to any particular place, they shall be accounted true worshippers, who "worship God in spirit and truth." And therefore, some convenient place must be agreed upon by the society, since the new testament determines none.

As to the time, it is confessed that we christians have not so express and particular prescriptions of the seasons of worship as the Jews enjoyed, neither as to their weekly sabbath, or any other of their festivals: but there is sufficient evidence from sacred history, that the first day of the week was the usual season of public christian worship in the apostles times, and in the following ages; and the day was known among christians by the honourable title of the Lord's day, so far, that the observation of it was the characteristic, or distinguishing mark of a christian. Now since it was so early and so universally practised by the professors of christianity, we have just reason to think it was appointed by the inspired apostles, that christians should come together to worship God on that day, and give honour to their risen Saviour. *Acts ii. 1,—4. 41. xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. Rev. i. 10.* And that they should agree to come to worship at the same time, and the same place, is evident from *1 Cor. xi. 20, 33.* and *xiv. 23.* "The whole church were to be gathered together at one place, otherwise they were to tarry for one another till the chief part of them were come.

IV. Since mankind is mortal, and every human assembly will die away by degrees, unless it be supplied with new members, common reason directs every religious society to

\* Where the magistrate takes upon him, whether with or without order from heaven, to appoint all the forms, times, and places of worship, and the people willingly consent to it, and obey the magistrate herein, this is an implicate agreement among themselves, and attains the same end, in some measure, though it may happen to infringe christian liberty,

to receive in new members, upon their appearance to be properly qualified, according to the rules of that religion, and the judgment of that society; that there may be a continuance of this religion in the world.

And in the same manner the light of nature, or reason, and common prudence, teach us also, that if the persons who have thus professed any particular religion, do either renounce it in principle or profession, or maintain, in a public and notorious manner, such a set of notions, or such a course of conversation, or of worship, as is inconsistent with it, this religious society will think it proper to cast such persons out of their fellowship, that they may not infect the rest, nor dishonour their religion: For what fellowship has light with darkness, a man of vice with the sons of virtue, a *turk* with a *jew*, or a *pagan* with a *christian*?

And does not the new testament represent to us the christian churches receiving new members on their profession of christianity? *Acts* ii. 41, 47. "They who gladly received the word were baptized; and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls: And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." And does not the apostle teach the churches to take care that they be kept pure, and free from scandal, by separating themselves from evil members, and by casting out those that depart from the truth, or are guilty of gross immoralities? *2 Thess.* iii. 6. "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." *1 Cor.* v. 5, 11, 13. "When ye are gathered together, deliver such a one to *Satan*\*. Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump: that is, put away from among yourselves that wicked person. If a man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, keep no company with such a one; no, not to eat." And those who deny the resurrection, and overthrow the faith of some, are delivered to *Satan*, and cast out of the church into the world, which is his kingdom, "that they may learn not to blaspheme." *1 Tim.* i. 19, 20. and *2 Tim.* ii. 17, 18.

Reason and christianity also join to inform us, that, upon the credible evidence of a sincere repentance, and a change of heart and life, such offender should be forgiven, and received into the religious society again: So the offending *corinthian* was forgiven, and received and restored again to the love and communion of the christian church there. See *2 Cor.* ii. 7—9.

V. It is evident to common reason, when such a voluntary religious society is instituted, the right of receiving or casting out members, or restoring them upon repentance, lies originally in the society itself, because the society itself is formed, and subsists, by the mutual compact of its own members; and whatsoever qualifications are required of persons, in order to become members of this body, it is the society itself that has an original right to judge whether the persons have these qualifications or no. It was upon the mutual acknowledgement of such qualifications, expressed or implied, that this society was first founded; and as a voluntary society, it must be maintained on the same foot, otherwise new members will be likely to be admitted, and imposed upon them, to the great dislike and injury of the society.

Indeed they may depute several particular persons of their number, whom they suppose better skilled therein, as elder and wiser, to act for the whole society, and particularly

\* Whether the delivering an offender to *Satan*, in the primitive times, did include in it the infliction of any sore bodily disease, though it be probable, yet it is not certain, nor universally agreed; but I think it is agreed pretty universally, that such a one was cast out of the church, and delivered back again into the world, which is the kingdom of *Satan*; who is called in the scripture "the prince and the god of this world." *John* i. 4. *2 Cor.* iv. 4.



particularly to examine into the qualifications of persons, and the merits of the cause, when members are to be received, or to be cast out; but they should never renounce their own original right. They may also appoint any particular person to go before the rest in this matter, to give them his advice herein, to acquaint them what persons are fit to be received, and to pronounce the sentence of receiving them into the society, or excluding them from it, according to the evidence of their qualifications: And this, I presume, will be usually allowed to be the office of the fixed pastor, or president of the assembly, where there is such a president.

And does not the new testament generally give directions agreeable to this dictate of the light of nature? Does not St. Paul direct to the churches themselves his apostolic advices about receiving, casting out, or restoring members? See his advice to the church at *Rome*, *Rom.* i. 7. and xiv. 1. "Ye saints at *Rome*, receive him that is weak in faith." *Rom.* xv. 7. "Receive ye one another." *Rom.* xvi. 2. "Receive ye *Phoebe* in the Lord as becometh saints." See his advice to the *Corinthians*, *1 Cor.* v. 4. "In the name of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, when ye are gathered together, deliver such a wicked man to *Satan*." verse 13. "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." And in *2 Cor.* ii. 6. "this is called a punishment inflicted by many." And verses 7, 8, 10. "the church was taught and required to forgive him upon his evident repentance, to confirm their love towards him to the fellowship of the church."

It is granted indeed, when proper officers are chosen and fixed among them, it is by their ministrations, by their advice and direction, christian churches should usually exercise this discipline; and so the orders of *Christ* are directed to the angels of the churches. *Rev.* chapters ii. and iii. But the whole work of reformation and discipline there required, is such as eminently concerns the churches or people themselves, and not the pastors only.

It is also granted, that many times churches do commit the whole care of this matter into the hand of their ministers, as being usually fittest to judge of the profession made; but it ought never to be so entirely given into their hands, as to renounce the people's right of judging in these affairs. "*Diotrephes*, who loved to have the pre-eminence among them, assumed to himself the right of receiving and casting out members from the church; but he was severely reprov'd for his pride and usurpation, when he forbid his fellow-christians to receive brethren who were worthy." *3 John* 9, 10. Ministers may happen to prove so injudicious, or so negligent of enquiry into the profession and qualifications of persons to be admitted, so subject to prejudices, or so engaged in a party-quarrel, as to fill the church with such members as may be very contrary to the sentiments of the majority of the church; and if the people renounce their own right in this affair, they may thank themselves for such unhappy consequences.

I would add also, that if people entirely give up the right of admission and exclusion to the minister alone, they can never cast the minister himself out, if he be never so impious and immoral.

Having found the constitution of a christian church to be so conformable to the dictates of right reason, let us consider what are the acts of worship which are to be paid to God in public, and in what manner must they be performed; and we shall find the light of reason and the new testament happily agreeing here also.

VI.

It is granted this text refers to *Phoebe*, as a traveller at *Rome*, and desiring to hold occasional communion with the christian church there; but the reason of things is the same, or stronger, with regard to receiving persons into a fixed and constant communion with any church: There must be still a mutual agreement.

VI. The several acts of worship which the light of nature directs us to pay to the great God, are such as these: To adore him with all humility, on the account of his glorious perfections, and his wonderful works of power and wisdom; to join together in prayer to God for such blessings as we stand in need of; to confess our sins, and ask the forgiveness of them; to acknowledge his mercies, and give thanks to his goodness; and to sing with the voice to his honour and praise. The light of nature directs us also to seek continually a further acquaintance with the nature and will of that God whom we worship, in order to practise our duty the better, and please our creator; and to provide some way for the further instruction of those who are ignorant of that religion, and come into their assemblies to be instructed; and for the exhortation of the people to fulfil their duty to God and their neighbours. And if there are any special rites or ceremonies, such as belong to social worship, the light of nature tells us, that here they ought to be performed.

And does not the new testament set all these matters before us so plainly and frequently, with regard to christianity, that I need not stand to cite chapter and verse, where these things are practised by the apostles, and the primitive christians, in their assemblies? Here adorations, prayers, and thanksgivings, are offered up to God, but in the name of *Jesus*, as their only mediator: Here their addresses are made to God with one mind, and with one mouth, to the glory of God, who is the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*: Here psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, are sung to the honour of the creator and redeemer: Here the word of God is preached for the instruction of the ignorant or unbelievers, who come into the christian assemblies, that sinners or infidels may be converted, and christians edified, and exhorted to persist in the faith, and improve in holiness. *1 Cor. xiv. 23.* Here the great ordinance of christian communion, the Lord's supper, is celebrated, by distributing and receiving bread and wine, and eating and drinking in remembrance of their common Saviour and of his death. *1 Cor. xi. 20—26.* As for the other ordinance, viz. baptism, it being not so properly an act of public or social religion, I do not find it is any where required to be done in public; and though it might be rendered more extensively useful by that means for some purposes, yet it may be performed in private houses, or in retired places, as it sometimes was in the primitive ages.

VII. Since there ought to be such public ministrations performed as I have described, our own reason and observation of mankind sufficiently informs us, that all persons are not capable of leading these public religious services; viz. they are not all fit to speak usefully in the name of men to God, in prayer or praise, or to teach the things of God to others, in a profitable and becoming manner, nor with decency and exactness to celebrate all the rights and ceremonies of any religion. Reason itself therefore directs us that there should be one or more persons chosen in every religious assembly, who should be wise and prudent, grave, sober and faithful, and better skilled in the things of religion than others; and who should be capable in a more clear and happy manner to express them, that he, or they, may go before the congregation, and lead them in their several acts of worship; that they may give instruction to the rest, and with their lips offer up their common addresses to God, and celebrate the sacred rites of their religion.

For this purpose reason teaches us, that if a person so qualified be not found in any particular religious society, they ought to seek one elsewhere. And persons who have superior skill in this religion, should train up others, from time to time, in



the articles of their religion, that they may be able to instruct the people, and become more capable of this public service.

If it be enquired, what the light of reason directs about the investiture of such a person in this office? I know of nothing more, but that the people should make all due enquiry concerning his qualifications; that they should ask the opinion or advice of other teachers, who are better skilled in this religion than themselves, where it can be conveniently obtained; and when they themselves also have had sufficient experience of his abilities, and knowledge of his virtues, they should agree to chuse him into this office; and that he himself solemnly should accept of it; and devote, or give up, himself to it; and that he should be with great solemnity recommended, by public prayers, to the blessing of God, in the discharge of it. This is all the investiture that reason seems to require\*. And this man, thus set apart to the sacred work, should continually endeavour to improve his qualifications, and render his religious services more and more useful to the people, and take due care, as a faithful overseer, that the people maintain the practice of the religion they profess.

Reason itself also teaches us, that if there be any persons in the assembly who give sufficient evidence of their being inspired, or taught of God, and of having any divine commission to instruct the people; these persons ought eminently to be received as teachers, and employed in such religious service.

Let us now see what the new testament, or the rule of christianity directs in this point.

This is sufficiently evident, that scripture has appointed such a set of men, or such officers in the christian church, as may lead divine worship in their assemblies, and may celebrate the institutions of the gospel among them. We find their names and titles frequently mentioned as pastors, teachers, elders, bishops, shepherds, &c. We find the duties of their station often spoken of, the characters and qualification of the persons described, their support provided for, and the people's duty to them enjoined. And since the church is to continue to the end of the world, or till *Christ* comes again from heaven, it is plain there must be always such persons to minister in holy things in every age.

In the very primitive times there was a great variety of talents and capacities, for the ministrations of christian worship, conferred by inspiration upon those who embraced the religion of *Christ*: These were taught of God in a more immediate manner†: And where these extraordinary gifts were numerous, either they needed no other preachers, teachers, or ministers, always supposing some wise person amongst them to be a *prophet*, a president, or chairman, who, by natural rules of prudence and order, should keep their various performances within the limits of decency and edification; or, at least, they were not yet furnished with particular officers, being then but in an imperfect state as to regular order. Such was the *corinthian* church:

And

\* According to the light of nature and reason, no man should be made a teacher, or president, or leader in any voluntary religious society, but by the consent and agreement of that society, to put themselves under his instructions and care. No civil powers have authority, by the law of nature, in these matters of religion and conscience; nor can any man be made an officer in any society, without his own free consent: And as all religious affairs regard either the honour of God or converse with him, so an address to God for a blessing, is a natural and reasonable solemnity, that should attend the entrance into a religious office.

† These gifts were so much distributed in that day among the christians at *Jerusalem*, that even the deacons, who were appointed to take care of the poor, had such extraordinary gifts, and exercised them now and then in teaching the people as evangelists. See *Acts* vi. 2, 3.

And where any apostle or evangelist was present, he is reasonably supposed to preside; or, in his absence, he sometimes gives direction for their conduct, as though he were present. 1 Cor. v. 3, 4.

But in other churches, where these gifts were but few, the chief possessors of them, and especially the early and more experienced converts, were chosen out to be elders, or guides, and leaders of their worship, pastors, or teachers, according to their peculiar talents of exhortation, or of instruction: And they were sometimes called overseers, that is, bishops, having an oversight of the people, and their behaviour; being reasonably supposed to know more of the will of *Christ* than the common people, and to be more solicitous for the honour of christianity, and for its preservation.

It is probable that sometimes these elders, or overseers, which words are used promiscuously in several places of the new testament\*, might be pointed out by the direction of a spirit of prophecy, or by the gift of discernment of spirits, by the apostles, or other inspired men, in that day, as *Timothy* was pointed out by prophecy, to be an evangelist, 1 Tim. i. 18. and iv. 14. And in this sense the apostles and evangelists, *Paul* and *Barnabas*, *Timothy* and *Titus* might perhaps, by the direction of the holy Spirit, nominate the persons fit to be ordained elders in the churches, and, upon the consent of the churches, might ordain or appoint them for that purpose. Acts xiv. 23. 1 Tim. v. 22. Tit. i. 5. And perhaps this is the reason why it is said of the elders of *Ephesus*, that the holy Ghost had made them overseers. Acts xx. 17, 28. But it is hardly to be supposed that any persons were made rulers, teachers or overseers of any church of serious christians, without the consent of the society, who were to be taught and governed by them in matters relating to their eternal interests.

Even when an apostle was to be chosen in the room of *Judas*, the hundred and twenty disciples, of whom eleven were apostles, joined in the choice of two persons, out of which the lot determined one to be an apostle. Acts i. 15, 23. Deacons, who manage the secular affairs of the church, were chosen by the people. Acts vi. 3. And still more reasonable it is, that elders, or bishops, who have the care of their souls, should be chosen by them who want and desire their instructions in such important concerns.

In following ages, when these extraordinary gifts ceased in the churches, it is more evident from the histories of those times, that their overseers, or bishops, were chosen by the people. And the characters of them are given us at large, and very particularly, in two places of scripture. 1 Tim. iii. 1—13. and Tit. i. 5, 6. And certainly this is left upon record, that we might be directed in such a choice to the end of the world, as well as to give directions to *Timothy* and *Titus* in the performance of their extraordinary office at this time.

As for the investiture of men with this office, the new testament gives us some notices that they were set apart by solemn prayer and fasting, and generally with laying on of the hands of the persons who were inspired, or possessed of some superior character. Whether this rite were designed to communicate any new gifts, or to pronounce an inspired and effectual blessing on their ministrations; or whether

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\* It may not be improper in this place to point out the chief scriptures where these characters are used promiscuously, and seem to denote one and the same office. Acts xx. 17. "From *Miletus* *Paul* sent to *Ephesus*, and called the elders of the church. But in verse 28. St. *Paul* calls these very persons overseers, *ἐπισκοποι*, bishops. Tit. i. 5. "Ordain elders in every city." verse 6. "If any be blameless." For, in verse 7. "a bishop must be blameless." 1 Pet. v. 1, 2. "The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder; feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof, the bishoprick thereof, *ἐπισκοπώτε*. But our english translators have generally taken care to keep the word "bishop" for the most part out of sight, where it is applied to presbyters, or elders, in the greek.



it was only retained in the christian church as it had been an ancient rite, used almost from the earliest ages of mankind, on several occasions, particularly in the solemn benediction of a person, or in the prayer for a blessing on him, or appointment of him to any special service, I am not able to determine\*: This is certain, that the rite of imposition of hands has something natural in it, when we pray for a blessing to descend on any particular person, and more especially at his entrance into an office; as it were to point him out in a visible manner to God and the world. Good old *Jacob* laid his hands on *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*, when he blessed them. *Gen.* xlviii. 14—18. And in *Deut.* xxxiv. 9. *Moses* laid his hands on *Joshua*, as his successor. The children of *Israel* also laid their hands on the *Levites*, at their dedication to the service of the tabernacle. *Numb.* viii. 10. But as there are different opinions on this subject, I dismiss it, without any other determination than this, that it seems to be a sort of natural ceremony, an innocent and ancient rite at such seasons; though I do not see sufficient proof of the certain necessity of it. Even as lifting up the hands to heaven, in prayer for a blessing on one's self, is a sort of natural rite or gesture, used by *jews* and *heathens*, and not necessary to be used in every solitary or personal prayer. The laying on the hands on another person, when we are praying for a blessing on him, seems to be of the same kind, viz. a sort of natural rite or gesture, much used in the old testament and the new; and though it is not plainly made necessary on every such occasion, yet it must still be acknowledged it was often, if not always, used in the primitive and inspired times, when either gifts or offices were conferred by some particular persons upon others.

And it certainly adds a sort of solemnity to the work; and it has so much of countenance from scripture, that I think it cannot be called a mere human and arbitrary invention of men.

This is certain, that such persons were to be trained up in a succession for this service in the churches. "*Timothy* was required to commit to faithful men the things that he had heard and learned of *St. Paul*, that they might be able to teach others also. *2 Tim.* ii. 2. "And these persons were to give up themselves continually to the word and prayer, as the apostles did," *Acts* vi. 4. and to excite and stir up their talents for instruction and edification, to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, and give themselves wholly to them, that their profiting might appear to all. For if this be required of so extraordinary a person as *Timothy*, *1 Tim.* iv. 13—16. much more reasonably is it required of those who have no extraordinary gifts.

I might further add, that these teachers and ministers of the gospel are required in the new testament to be faithful, diligent, and zealous in the work of *Christ*, "willingly taking the care, or oversight, of the religious concerns of the people, in instructing and overseeing the flock, and watching over them for their spiritual good, as well as going before them in all acts of holiness, and being examples to all other christians in word, in conversation, in faith, in charity, and in purity from all sin. verse 12."

\* *Timothy*, a young evangelist, had the hands of the elders, that is, "the presbytery, laid upon him." *1 Tim.* iv. 14. "And perhaps, at the same time, he was blessed by the hands of *St. Paul* with extraordinary gifts." *2 Tim.* i. 6. "And he himself, an evangelist, was ordered to lay hands suddenly on no man." *1 Tim.* v. 22. It is a question indeed whether *Timothy*, or the presbytery, could confer any extraordinary gifts or blessings; it is more probable, for many reasons, that this belonged only to the apostles; and then this their imposition of hands could not be designed for the conferring of extraordinary gifts; but still it might be used to pronounce a prophetic blessing on the preacher, which no uninspired person could do; or finally, it might be the ordinary form of benediction, or of institution to an office.

## S E C T I O N III.

*A brief enquiry how far the modes of the mission, or ordination, of primitive ministers, are our rule now.*

**U**PON this short survey of things, under this head, give me leave first to make one observation, and then consider the enquiry proposed.

The observation is this: Various were the affairs and regulations of the primitive churches, relating to their several officers, whether apostles, evangelists, bishops, pastors, teachers, prophets, elders, &c. and in the nomination of those officers, whether by *Jesus Christ* himself, by prayer and lot, by inspiration of the Spirit, by prophecy, by gifts of discerning spirits, or by the choice of the people, &c. And in their ordination, or mission, by fasting, and by imposition of hands, as well as prayer: And whether this were performed by the apostles, prophets, presbyters, or elders, or evangelists, &c. Now all these things at that time were so much directed, governed, influenced, determined, and transacted by extraordinary gifts, and the inspired persons who possessed them, that I cannot find, in the new testament, any one instance of the choice and mission, appointment or investiture, of any ordinary officer, or officers, who were not of the extraordinary kind; and therefore these things cannot, in every point, be rules or patterns for all following times.

If any one here object, that if we suppose the formation, ordination, and mission of ministers, to be so described in the *Acts* of the apostles, as not to give following ages an exact rule or pattern for their ordinary practice; why may we not also suppose some of the doctrines and duties of personal christianity described in the gospel, to belong only to extraordinary times?

The answer is easy: viz. That mankind are to be saved through all ages of christianity in the same way, by the same gospel, the same doctrines and duties. But the preachers of this gospel may not be furnished nor ordained the same way, when extraordinary commissions, extraordinary gifts, and powers, are ceased: For it is apparent, that these extraordinary preachers and governors of the church mingled the exercise of their extraordinary powers with some of their ordinary ministrations.

Hence it comes to pass, that it is so difficult a question, and so exceeding hard to affirm with exactness and certainty, how many of these officers, and of these solemn rites and actions, were designed by *Christ* to be continued in the following ordinary occasions of these churches, when extraordinary gifts should cease; and how many of these forms are to be practised in all succeeding ages. Most of the learned and inquisitive men who have written since, have greatly differed in their opinions of this matter, and left many things therein difficult, or dubious, after all their laborious comments.

Let us enquire then what there is of all these things, that is certain and necessary in our age, and is not subject to this occasion of doubting which I have mentioned.

1. This seems certain by the light of nature and reason, that christian assemblies, as well as any others, in ordinary as well as extraordinary times, should have a teacher, to instruct the ignorant in knowledge, and make known to the church the mind and will of God in his word: They should have an exhorter, to stir up the people to the practice of their duty; a man of prayer, to address God in their public devotions; an overseer, or bishop, to take charge of the flock, to inspect the manners

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of the people, and watch for the good of their souls; a president, to be chairman in their assemblies, to keep up order there; and a grave and skilful person fit to administer the rites and seals of the christian religion. Now all these characters, capacities, and talents, are often contained in one single person, who may be sufficient for a small church; or, perhaps, in two or three persons, for the supply of larger churches.

2. I think we may take it also for a certainty, that where God doth not interpose to point out the teachers, or overseers, in any christian church, by inspiration, there is no person or persons, either in the church or state, who have any rightful power, derived either from reason or scripture, to impose a teacher, or overseer, on any assembly of christians whatsoever, without their own consent; for it is they themselves must give an account for their own souls to God; and therefore, they must have a right to chuse who shall teach and lead them in matters of religion. Conscience is too sacred a thing to be imposed upon by fallible men, and the soul is too valuable to have it's concerns intrusted with any persons, without our own agreement.

And though the choice or consent of the churches may not be so particularly mentioned in scripture, when elders or bishops were ordained among them, by persons who were inspired, yet reason itself supposes it; and their extraordinary gifts from the holy Spirit, proved and required the duty of submission and consent in the people, even if they had not a hand in the first chusing of them. The great God could do them no wrong by appointing elders, or bishops, for them, in an immediate way, or by inspiration.

But when extraordinary gifts ceased, we find many testimonies in the early writers, to the consent of the people in the choice of their church-officers. The scripture itself makes it evident, that deacons were chosen by the people in primitive times. *Acts* vi. 3. "Brethren, look ye out from among you seven men," &c. verses 5—7. And these were to be intrusted only with the money, or temporal things of the church. And nature, and universal custom, teach us, that physicians and lawyers, who are intrusted with the care of the bodies and estates of men, are not imposed on us by others, but are chosen by the persons who intrust them. If I would learn philosophy, or any science, art, or trade, I have a natural right to chuse who shall instruct me in it. Even children are allowed to chuse their own guardians; and boys, who are apprentices, to chuse their own masters. And doth not reason loudly proclaim this truth, that the guides of our souls in religion ought to be chosen by ourselves when we are at the age of man, as being a matter of dearer and more divine importance than any other; and an affair in whose success none can be so much concerned as ourselves; for it is of ourselves that God will expect a final account. Let us take heed then to our own conduct in this matter, and remember, that the new testament has never appointed any uninspired men to chuse pastors or teachers for a whole assembly of people, and impose them upon the assembly, or upon any particular members thereof, against their will.

3. It is certain also, that due care ought to be taken that the persons be fitly qualified who are chosen into this office or ministry: And though private christians have a right to chuse their ministers, and may best judge of the general suitableness of their talents to their own edification, yet they are seldom so fit judges of the learned qualifications of ministers, as those who have been some years ministers, pastors, or teachers themselves, whether of the same or of neighbouring churches; and therefore, reason tells us, it is generally most proper that some of these more knowing and experienced men should be consulted in this matter; and, after due examination  
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and knowledge of the person, their approbation be obtained to encourage the choice of the people, where it can be conveniently had : And therefore, in scripture, as I shall shew immediately, we never find any ordinations by the people, alone without superior helps; nor should it ever be done, where such helps can be obtained.

4. May I not add, It is certain also, that there ought to be some sacred solemnity attending the investiture or ordination of every such officer? This has always been done in all nations, both in civil and sacred affairs. This ought to be done by a solemn and public dedication of himself to this service, with the prayers of the church concurring to seek a divine blessing on him therein. Reason itself dictates this as a most proper practice. And it is as certain, that the union and assistance of a few other ministers, both in prayer and exhortation, make a sort of beautiful harmony, and add solemn weight to this transaction of dedicating a person to God : They are generally better capable of offering up the prayers of the society to God on such an occasion : They are best able to give a word of counsel or advice to the new minister and to the people ; which is a ceremony that should usually attend such an investiture into this office ; for "every thing is sanctified by the word and prayer :"*1 Tim. iv. 5.* And this will have a tendency to maintain a happy union and correspondence between different assemblies of the same religion, whether the ministers put their hands on the head of the new minister or no.

5. This is also certain, that the imposition of hands, or any ordination whatsoever, by bishops, or presbyters, can never be absolutely necessary to make a new presbyter or bishop ; for the Lord *Jesus Christ* would never leave the subsistence or propagation of his churches, or the virtue or efficacy of his word and his sacraments, to depend on the uninterrupted succession of any office or officer, bishop or presbyter, to be transmitted from hand to hand, by any necessary forms of ordination, from the apostles days down to our's ; for then it would be impossible for any church, or even for any particular christian, to know whether ever they have had an authentic minister, whether they have ever received the gospel truly, or partook of any true sacrament, or have any just hope of salvation ; because it is impossible for plain christian, or even for any ministers in our age, so far from the apostles, to be absolutely assured, that such ordinations have been rightly transmitted through sixteen hundred years, without any one interruption. And I might add, the only evidence and proof that any persons pretend to have of such a succession, is through the papal chair, which is attended with abundant uncertainties and impossibilities ; as has been often shewn by protestant writers.

There is another reason also why the ordination, or imposition of hands, by either bishops or elders, or any superior character, cannot be absolutely necessary to make a minister, or ordain a pastor, in a particular church ; and that is, that a whole nation may be corrupted, and every bishop and elder therein may be departed from the faith and practice of the gospel, as it was in *England* in the days of popery ; then, if a certain number of good men join themselves in a church, or voluntary society, for the sake of reformation, and enjoying pure worship, they can never have a minister settled and ordained among them, while these corrupt clergy around them refuse their assistance, and even forbid and oppose it to their utmost. But our blessed Lord would never leave his people, who desire reformation, under such circumstances of impossibility to be reformed. There must therefore, in some cases, be a power of ordination vested in the minister and people themselves, without the absolute necessity of recourse to others. And this is called a mere independent, or a popular ordination ; as that by bishops is called episcopal, and that by elders, presbyterian.



6. Will it not follow, from all these premises, that when there are no inspired persons in a church, and the christian assemblies are left to the ordinary ways of supporting themselves from age to age, and of supplying themselves with officers for their edification, these church-affairs are to be conducted by such plain rules and dictates of the light of nature and common prudence, as are mentioned before, and which, in the days of extraordinary gifts, were never contradicted; though those extraordinary gifts, at that time, might sometimes supersede the necessity of some of these prudential rules: Yet always keeping an eye to the conduct of the primitive churches, so far as the extraordinary persons and gifts, orders and actions, in those times, did not plainly interpose, to super-add any thing above and beyond what was practicable and proper in ordinary cases; and always taking care that nothing be imposed as necessary, but what scripture, and the plain reason of things, have evidently made so; and managing all other prudential concerns by the joint opinion and consent of the society itself? I think, if we act by this rule, we cannot displease *Christ* our Lord, even though we should happen to mistake in some little formalities.

7. Though the people in the uninspired ages of the church must always chuse their own officers, and perhaps, in some uncommon cases, may ordain them alone; yet, since in all the rules, directions, and examples, which we have in the new testament, about the ordination or mission of any new officers, there is mention made of some superior person or persons, apostles or evangelists, elders, prophets, or teachers, appointing or ordaining them, or praying for them, or conferring gifts upon them, or committing the gospel to them, or laying hands on them; and since there is not any one appointment, mission, or ordination, either of deacons or ministers, that I know of, in the new testament, without some one or more of these things, I am ready to think this might be so far an example to us, as that we should not too easily and readily encourage the ordinations of new ministers, to be performed totally and merely by the people, without some person or persons of superior characters, that is, bishops or elders, engaged with them in this work; except only, as was said before, in cases of such necessity, where the concurrence and assistance of such elders as are found in the faith, and pious in life, could not be obtained. Though popular ordinations may be valid, and may be sometimes necessary, yet it seems more regular, according to scripture, to have usually the active concurrence and assistance of some elders therein; and where their assistance may be obtained, I cannot call it a regular ordination without them.

8. And in the last place, I would say, that since there are some texts in the new testament, wherein single persons, either apostles, as *Paul* and *Barnabas*, ordained ministers in the churches; or evangelists, as *Timothy* and *Titus*; and since other missions or ordinations are intimated to be performed by several persons, viz. prophets, teachers, elders, or a presbytery; as in *Acts* xiii. 1. and *1 Tim.* iv. 14. Since there is sometimes mention made of the imposition of hands in the mission of a minister, and sometimes no mention of it; and since it is evident, that in some cases popular ordinations are, and must be, valid, without any bishop or elder; I think none of these differences should be made a matter of violent contest among christians; nor ought any hard words to be pronounced against each other by those of the episcopal, presbyterian, or independent way. Surely all may agree thus far, that various forms or modes, seeming to be used in the mission or ordination of ministers in primitive times, may give a reasonable occasion, or colour, for sincere and honest searchers after truth to follow different opinions on this head; and do therefore demand our candid and charitable sentiments concerning those who differ from us.

And

Sect. IV. *Reason and revelation agree in social religion.*

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And indeed, the chief ground of the differences between all christians in matters of ordination, is that wherewith I began this section; viz. that it is an uncertain thing, whether several of these particular modes and actions, in the furniture, mission, or ordination of a minister, which are mentioned in the books of the new testament, do really belong only to the extraordinary days of inspiration, or whether they must be imitated as our example, in all ordinary occurrences of the church; always supposing and maintaining, that none of these ceremonies or assistances from other ministers or elders, are always and absolutely necessary to the mission or ordination of a new minister; since there may be seasons wherein the concurrence of good bishops, ministers, or elders, cannot be obtained; at least, not with any tolerable conveniency, or without sending abroad to far distant nations.

S E C T I O N IV.

*The rest of the instances wherein reason and revelation agree in matters of social worship.*

**B**UT it is time now to proceed to the eighth instance of church-affairs, and shew how far the common sense and reason of mankind concur with the revelation of the new testament in this matter.

VIII. The light of reason further teaches us, that persons who are set apart for these religious services, and whose time and thoughts are much to be employed in them, that they may render public worship useful and entertaining to the people, and who have a charge to take care of the conversation of others as well as of their own, will not have much time to spare among the cares and businesses of this world, to provide themselves with necessary food and raiment, a comfortable subsistence, and the conveniencies of life; and yet it is proper they should be honoured and supported above the very lowest ranks of the people, lest their ministrations be brought into contempt by their poverty: And upon this account, in all ages and in all nations, the very light of reason has directed mankind to support and maintain their priests, or those that minister to them in things sacred.

And does not the new testament and the authority of our Saviour, by his apostles, decree and maintain the same thing, 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14? "Do ye not know that they who minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple, and that both in *jewish* and gentile nations? And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar; even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

But let it be observed also, that though christian ministers should be so supported in temporal things, that they may not labour under perpetual cares and daily anxieties, how to get bread and raiment for themselves and their families, and that they may maintain their proper authority in preaching, reproving and exhorting, and live above the fear or shame that may arise from poverty and dishonourable dependencies, yet there is no rule nor example in scripture that should raise them so far above the people in riches or grandeur, as to become lords of God's heritage, or tempt them to assume sovereign dominion over their conscience, faith or practice.

IX. With regard to the poor that happen to be joined to any religious societies whatsoever, reason and humanity dictate to us, that they ought to be maintained by



certain contributions of their neighbours, or the towns and cities wherein they dwell, for this is a matter of civil concernment, and a sort of natural duty to our fellows, as man is a sociable creature.

But if the civil society or place where they dwell, does not take care to maintain them, and especially if they are neglected, because they do not profess the established or national religion, reason tells us, it is then certainly the duty of those who are combined in that special religious society, to take care of their support. For what pretence can a man make to serious religion towards God, if he will not shew his love to his neighbour, and especially to one who loves the same God also? *1 John* iii. 17, 18. Now that this provision for the poor may be managed with regularity, prudence, and success, the light of nature teaches us, that one or more persons of the society should be chosen, to collect such charitable contributions from the assembly, and to distribute it with equity, prudence and goodness, for the support of the poor?

And does not the new testament give a plain command, when the care of the poor of the church at *Jerusalem* was too burdensome for the apostles, or ministers of that congregation, to chuse out persons for this purpose, who were afterwards called deacons, *Acts* vi. 1—6? “When some of the widows were neglected in the daily ministration, or charitable supply, then the twelve apostles said to the multitude of the disciples, it is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.—Wherefore, brethren, look you out among you—men of honest report, full of the holy Ghost and of wisdom\*, whom we may appoint over this business. And when they had chosen them, they set them before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.” There are also particular directions given, what sort of persons should be chosen to this office of deacons; their characters are written down at large, *1 Tim.* iii. 8—13. because it was designed to be a standing office in the christian church through all ages.

As the deacons are persons appointed by the new testament, to take care of the money collected by the church, for the supply of the table of the poor, so the same persons are very naturally and properly employed in christian churches, to take care also of all other contributions of the society, for the supply of the table of the minister, and of the Lord's table at the holy communion. With them also are entrusted other necessary expences and outward accommodations that belong to public worship.

X. I add yet further, the light of nature and reason teach us, that all the management of religious affairs in a society should be performed with a decency and dignity becoming the things of God; and with due regularity and order; for he is a God of order; with gentleness also and condescension, peace and love, for quarrels and fightings destroy religion, and break all the bonds of religious society.

And are we not taught the same things in the new testament? Are not christians continually called upon to “put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness,” *Coloss.* iii. 14. “to do all things without disputings and murmurings,” *Phil.*

ii. 14.

\* It is granted that the deacons then chosen at *Jerusalem* had extraordinary gifts. *Stephen* was a noble speaker, and might occasionally teach the gospel; *Philip* also was either a preacher then, or might use the office of a deacon well, and so grow up to an evangelist. *Acts* vi. 3, 8. and viii. 5—13. 26—36. and thus have power to baptize, verse 38. as is intimated in *1 Tim.* iii. 13. But these powers or gifts did not arise from their office as deacons. Some of them had these gifts before, in common with multitudes of converts in the primitive times: And these gifts might perhaps fit them the better to discern, who were proper persons to be supported out of the churches stock, and to give a word in season occasionally to the poor, of whom they had the care. But the mere office of deacons, which consists in assisting the ministers to take care of feeding the poor, and of laying out the public money continues, when these extraordinary gifts are ceased, and the characters of persons, fit to be chosen do not necessarily include public preaching: Nor do we find *Didaxis* or “aptness to teach,” mentioned among the characters of a deacon.

ii. 14. "to do all their things with charity," 1 Cor. xvi. 14. "And that all things should be done with decency and in order," 1 Cor. xiv. 40? And that as they ought to keep peace at home and in the "church of Christ, they should give no offence, neither to jews nor gentiles, but as far as possible live peaceably with all men." 1 Cor. x. 32. Rom. xii. 18.

In the last place, the light of nature and reason also acquaints us, that when persons who belong to one religious society travel to distant places, they should have some recommendations by epistles to other societies, which are built upon the same religious principles, that they may be received into their assemblies, and enjoy all the parts and privileges of worship and friendly society together with them? This is called occasional communion, to distinguish it from that fixed and constant communion, which the agreed members of the same religious society constantly enjoy.

And here also the new testament very happily concurs with the dictates of reason and common prudence: For when primitive christians were called by providence to a distance from their own dwelling, and from that church with which they usually worshipped, they were recommended by letters unto other christian churches in the world, that they might be received by them into all the parts of christian fellowship. Such epistles St. Paul speaks of 2 Cor. iii. 1. he needed them not, though others stood in need of them: And such a recommendation had *Phebe*, a member of the church at *Cenchrea*, when she travelled to *Rome*. Rom. xvi. 1, 2. "I recommend unto you *Phebe* our sister, who is a servant of the church of *Cenchrea*, that you receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints." And such a recommendatory letter was written by the brethren of *Ephesus*, to commend *Apollos* to be received by the churches of *Achaia*. Acts xviii. 27. "The brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him."

## SECTION V.

*Where revelation is silent, reason must direct.*

**T**HUS we have seen a variety of instances, wherein the rules of christianity and scripture, so far as relates to social religion, correspond with those which the light of reason and prudence would dictate to wise and sober men, engaged in a religious society. Some of these are represented to us in the new testament, as express commands; others we may draw by easy reasonings from the examples of the apostles and the primitive churches, as well as from the circumstances which are contained, either in the matters of fact, or in the exhortations that relate to them.

And here I would observe, that though right reason might guide us into most of the same practices, yet it is a vast advantage to us that we have so many of these things prescribed, intimated or approved by the inspired writings of the new testament: For so imperfect is our understanding, and so weak our judgment, that the reasonings of men, even of a single congregation, or their humours which go for reason, would not easily agree in the same methods and forms of management, and there would probably be a far greater variety of opinions, and greater difficulties in the conduct of church affairs, than now there are; though even now there are so many, that render the christian world a theater of perpetual contest: But it must still be acknowledged that one main spring of the controversy is, because the passions and pride and interests of men, will not suffer them to hearken either to reason or scripture.



Though scripture hath determined so many particulars in a perfect conformity to right reason, yet it must be confessed there are other things which relate to christian worship and order, which are past over in silence, or at least, are not mentioned and prescribed with such plainness and evidence in the word of God, as is sufficient to direct every single punctilio of our practice. It is the pretence of finding out in scripture every lesser particular piece of conduct in a christian church, even such as belongs to all religious societies, that has tempted men to run to the old testament, and enquire of *Moses* and *Aaron* for advice, where they could not find it expressly written in the new, and strangely to warp and pervert many texts of the new testament from their native and proper meaning.

Let it be granted then, that scripture is silent in some little particulars about social religion: But even here we are not left without any direction, nor are we sent to uncertain traditions to make up for the silence of scripture, but we are naturally remitted to the common reason of things and human prudence as our guide\*. Yet always, as I said before, keeping our eye pointed toward the new testament, and forming our reasonings as far as possible on the same principles which seem to run through the social religion of the primitive times, so far as it did not depend on those extraordinary inspirations. Let us give also some instances of these.

I. Scripture does not tell us how many persons must go to make up a christian church: But reason will help us to answer this question, if we consider that the word "ecclesia" or church, properly signifies an assembly of people, and so it is used in the new testament, where it has no relation to a christian society, as among the heathens at *Ephesus*, *Acts* xix. 32, 39, 40. A very few therefore may be called an assembly, and may be sufficient to join together in christian fellowship, that they may partake of the Lord's supper, and carry on the face of public religion, when there are no other christians in the place where they dwell. And on the other hand, there should usually be no more in a church than can meet together in one place, can act as one assembly and join in social worship, in prayers and praises; for the apostle writing to the *Corinthians*, speaks twice of the whole church coming together in one place, *1 Cor.* v. 4. xi. 20. and xiv. 23. And the church of *Antioch* which was large met all together, *Acts* xiv. 27. Perhaps those words *Rom.* xv. 6. "that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God," may limit the number of a church, usually

\* The "sufficiency and perspicuity of the scripture in things necessary to salvation," is not at all impeached by this concession; for 1. The determinations of some lesser affairs relating to public worship, or the conduct of christian societies, are not things necessary to the salvation of any particular person, or to the essence or being of a christian church, though they may be needful to it's well-being and it's comfortable and regular subsistence. 2. When scripture is said to be "sufficiently full and clear in all things necessary to salvation," this doth not mean to exclude the common exercise of the reason and prudence of men, in order to apply the general directions of scripture to particular cases which occur, even in things which are necessary to salvation. As for instance: Scripture bids us "do good and relieve the poor:" But it doth not tell us how many poor we must relieve, whether two, or twenty, or two hundred, nor whether for one day or many, &c. This must be determined by the particular circumstances of every christian, and by the exercise of his reason and prudence, upon the special occasions and objects which appear. Again, scripture requires of us "to deny ourselves and to mortify our appetites and passions:" But it leaves it to the reason and prudence of every christian, in what things, at what seasons, in what manner, and in what degree this must be done, and how far we must go in mortifying all passion and appetite, or in acting self-denial, since it is certain we are not called to root out every passion, to resist every appetite, nor to deny every natural inclination. Thus the honour of scripture is still secured, both as to it's "perfection and it's perspicuity in things necessary to salvation," though in many lesser particulars, and in the application of general rules to actual practice, we are forced to recur to the exercise of human reason and common prudence, both in things of greater and lesser importance in the christian life. The scripture supposes us to be rational creatures, when it teaches us to be christians.

usually to so many as can join in attention and suitable meditation, while one mouth speaks in a way of instruction, prayer or praise. Such probably were the churches of *Asia* and *Galatia*, and in several towns and cities of which the new testament gives an account\*. But sometimes the word church is applied, to a very small or a very large number.

The word *Εκκλησία* or church, sometimes signifies a few christians in a house; so the church in the house of *Priscilla* and *Aquila*, is saluted by St. Paul in his epistle to the *Romans*; and the same church salutes the *Corinthians* in the end of St. Paul's first epistle to them, though it is certain there were many more christians round about them in *Rome*. Very probably doctor *Whitby*'s sense is just on these scriptures, viz. that this phrase is used concerning such whole families as were converts to the christian faith. And, besides, christians might meet together by agreement, in lesser societies for any spiritual occasions, and every such society might sometimes be called a church, or a christian assembly. Common prudence thought ten men enough to make a synagogue among the *Jews*. Our Saviour says, "Where two or three are gathered together in his name, there he is, or will be in the midst of them." *Matth.* xviii. 20. But this does not prove plainly that there should be a church formed where there are but two or three christians: Prudence must direct in this matter, since scripture is silent.

But on the other hand, we may enquire how large may a church be? The multitude of christians in *Jerusalem*, *Acts* xv. 12. are called the church at *Jerusalem*, verse 22. and *Acts* xi. 22. Not that it is necessary to suppose all the three thousand who were converted, *Acts* ii. 41. and all the five thousand, *Acts* iv. 4. to be members of the church at *Jerusalem*; for this being done in the days of pentecost, multitudes of *Jews* and proselytes were come from other nations to celebrate that festival, as *Acts* ii. 9. who being converted, returned to their own home. And it seems evident from the history, that when the apostles, elders, and brethren were met together at *Jerusalem*, to determine the question about circumcision, the whole church together with the apostles and elders wrote the letter and sent messengers with it to *Antioch*. *Acts* xv. 22, 23. So that it is possible one place might hold them, and they might make but one assembly.

But supposing they were too numerous to meet together in worship at once, especially in a time of persecution, they might divide themselves into smaller assemblies, for preaching and praying, and might break bread from house to house, if that phrase should signify the celebration of the Lord's supper. *Acts* ii. 42, 46.

Let it be further observed, that if the church at *Jerusalem* at that time was too large for one worshipping assembly, christian churches were but a forming at that time, and might not be absolutely formed and settled in the most perfect and convenient methods, for regular continuance and edification. Human affairs can proceed but by degrees, by reason of our weakness, even though they be conducted by divine inspiration.

Or perhaps, as all the christians in the world are sometimes called the church, so all who were in one city, may be called the church in that city, and the christians in one house may be called the church in that house, though they were not united by any other bond of agreement, but that of their common christianity. Yet I believe

\* There was a sort of union even of all the jewish national church in one place three times a year, by the congress of all the males who were representatives of the nation at *Jerusalem*; and perhaps they might join in the solemnity of some sacrifices by the aid of loud instruments of musick in the temple, according to the figurative worship of the levitical dispensation, so that they made one huge congregation worshipping together, or at least successively in the several days of the festival.



I believe it will be found, that a christian church in it's most usual form was made up of so many, as could conveniently meet together for worship, and consented to do so; and the reason of things seems to make this most convenient for many purposes of edification and mutual help.

II. Scripture is silent how any of the lesser or circumstantial affairs of worship or order, should be finally determined in a church, when there are some of the members of different sentiments, and make an opposition. But the light of reason and common prudence teach us, that in such affairs which God has left to the determination of men, such as the appointing the place and the hour of worship, chusing a minister, or the like, the major part of the assembly must determine it by their vote, and the lesser part ought to acquiesce, where it is not contrary to the dictates of their conscience, their edification in faith and holiness, or their reasonable conveniency. But if the lesser part solemnly declare, they cannot comply therewith, they may peaceably depart to another society of christians, who may be more entirely of their mind, for there must be no imposition; yet the major part may surely act for themselves.

May I have leave to add this further also, that if the society shall agree to have nothing determined in a church, without a vote of two thirds of the members, I do not see it unlawful to make this agreement: And perhaps if this were generally practised it might tend to the greater unanimity and peace of churches, because in any debate the dissenters would be the fewer\*.

III. The new testament is very silent about the combination of particular congregations, by some common band of union to make one national church. What does the light of nature teach us in this point?

I answer, there never was but one national church of God's own appointment; that was the church of the jews; and he himself saw fit to dissolve it; nor has he given men any revealed order or authority from himself to raise and establish another: Yet certainly the light of nature may sometimes direct and lead many christian congregations, even all that are in a county or in a nation, who agree in the necessary articles of christianity, to combine together and agree to assist each other many ways by counsel, encouragement, and support, in the maintainance of their sacred religion, always in a consistency with due allegiance preserved to their civil governors. The churches in a county or any particular district, may agree to send their ministers to consult together about their common welfare: They may chuse one person to transact matters of public and common concern for all the congregations in a county, and may bestow on him the name of an overseer, a superintendent, or a bishop; and so all the churches in a nation may desire their own ministers, or they may desire these their representatives or overseers, to join themselves in a common assembly or council for the public care of their liberty, or security of their peace, or advice in matters of consequence relating to their particular churches. And this assembly may chuse a president, and may call him their chief overseer or their archbishop; as I see nothing unlawful in all this, so neither do I see any ordinary necessity for it.

I

\* The conclave of cardinals at Rome, who are supposed to have the wisdom of this world in perfection, never will chuse a pope till two thirds of them are agreed in the same person: And hereby they keep the whole hierarchy and system of that antichristian building and government in greater unanimity and peace. Why may not christians learn the wisdom of the serpent from the men of this world, so long as they do but maintain the innocence of the dove?

I add further, that many particular churches, by their ministers, deputies or messengers, met together, may contrive and agree in what manner to carry on the work of preaching, catechising, expounding, prayer, or psalmody; they may consult what subjects are chiefly necessary to be insisted on in preaching, at special seasons and occasions; what psalms or hymns to be sung, and how often psalmody to be repeated in a day; what days or hours may be set apart for prayer and humiliation, or thanksgiving on special occasions of danger, or deliverance, &c. And if these things be agreed with much unanimity, by many wise and pious men, met together, by the request of the churches, for this purpose; and these matters be determined, so as plainly tends to the common safety and edification of the whole number of churches in a country or nation, the particular churches which are there, and especially particular persons in any such church, according to the common rules of society, should usually consent and agree to such public, and almost unanimous agreements, of their deputies in these matters, unless they can shew some very plain and considerable reason against it. Reason itself, or the light of nature, dictates this, that a very few persons should not humourously set themselves against such a general agreement in things which are in themselves indifferent; and which are left undetermined by the new testament; and which must be determined some way or other by the agreement of christians.

But still I think it must be maintained, that though all the churches in a nation should be united and combined in this manner by their representatives, and call themselves one national church, they could acquire no divine right or authority hereby, to impose any new doctrines or practices in religion, any creed, or articles, or canons, or rules of worship, of their own making, on any particular church or person whatsoever, without their own consent. Neither the light of nature, nor the new testament, so far as I can find, has given them any such power.

IV. Scripture is also supposed to be silent how far the power and government of elders, or bishops, may extend, though it calls them sometimes rulers, and requires the church to obey. *Heb. xiii. 7.* "Remember them who have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God. And verse 17. Obey them who have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls. —" May they not therefore invent new ceremonies of worship, and by their authority determine any of those matters in a christian society, which *Christ* has left undetermined in his word?

I answer, if scripture be silent herein, let all church-rulers take heed that they extend not this power beyond the actual commission or grant of scripture. It is always safer in points of dominion, to confine one's-self within the limits of the express grant or commission, than to go ever so little beyond it. When our natural ambition would tempt us to exceed these limits, our awe and dread of invading the province of *Christ*, should be an everlasting restraint.

Besides, when neither the light of reason nor scripture gives sufficient evidence of any authority to assume such a power, why should it be assumed? Reason tells us, that no man knows what rites or ceremonies will be pleasing to the great God, beyond the plain dictates of natural religion, unless God himself has revealed and required them.

The great and blessed God, when he would be worshipped with a variety of outward rites, established a church in *Judea*, with a hundred ceremonies, and new forms of worship and order; but he thought fit to abolish them again when the

*Messiah*



*Messiah* brought in his more spiritual kingdom, that is, the christian church. Now therein there are but two such ceremonies, of most plain and evident divine appointment; baptism and the Lord's supper; or, if you will, add the observation of the Lord's day. And it is not to be supposed that God would abolish and destroy a hundred ceremonies of his own institution, and give the fancies of men leave to invent a new scheme of ceremonial worship at their own pleasure, and impose new-invented rites upon their fellow-christians; especially when we are required to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith *Christ* has now made us free, and not to be entangled with yokes of bondage." *Gal. v. 1.* What a strange medley of superstitious and ridiculous fooleries would be introduced into christian worship, if the elders or rulers in any ages of the church, might invent ceremonies at their pleasure, and impose them on the people? The church of *Rome*, by this means is become a theater of *jewish* and heathen pageantry, to the great dishonour of God, the reproach of christianity, and the hazard and ruin of the souls of men.

It will be replied here, but is not some power of rule and government still given to judges in a nation, and to magistrates in a city, notwithstanding the unhappy consequences which may arise from the abuse of this power. The abuse of authority does not prove there is no such authority: Even so in churches, the power may be abused; yet surely, there must be some persons who have power and authority, rule and government, lodged in their hands, even since the days of inspiration and extraordinary commission; for without it, every society will run into great disorder and confusion. Pray what is this rule or power of government, which is granted to ordinary ministers in a christian church; and wherein does it consist, if not in appointing such things as *Christ* has left indifferent? To this I answer;

The rule and government which is committed to ordinary ministers in the church, so far as I can understand it, seems to consist in these things following; viz. in going before the people, and leading the several parts of their worship, and becoming their example in every duty; in teaching them the principles and rules of their religion; the knowledge, profession, and practice of those doctrines and duties, that worship and order, which reason and natural religion dictates, and that which *Christ* himself has revealed, super-added, and established in his word: It consists in exhorting, persuading, and charging the hearers with solemnity in the name and authority of *Christ*, to comply therewith; in instructing the people how to apply those general principles and rules to particular cases and occurrences, and giving them their best advice; in presiding in their assemblies, and particularly as to the admission and exclusion of members: It consists in watching over the flock; in guarding them against errors and dangers; in admonishing, and warning, and reproving, with all gravity and authority, those who neglect or oppose any of the rules of *Christ*. But I cannot find where our blessed Lord has given them any power, or pretence of power, to impose on conscience any such advices of their own, which neither reason nor revelation impose; much less to impose any of their own inventions of new doctrines, or duties; or so much as their own peculiar explanations of the words of *Christ*, by their own authority. When our Saviour gave commission to his disciples, or his apostles, to "preach the gospel to all nations, it was in this manner: Go, teach them to observe, not whatsoever you shall command, but, whatsoever I have commanded you." *Matth. xxviii. 20.*

It is granted indeed, the apostles had authority to explain the meaning of *Christ* to the churches by inspiration; but even they were not entrusted to invent any new doctrines or laws of their own, and impose them upon men.

And

And as these inspired persons have communicated to the churches all that *Christ* designed, we must rest there. And since *Christ* is the only Lord of his own church, whose wisdom is infallible, and whose power and authority are unquestionable, it is very unreasonable to suppose that he should leave any part of the doctrines or duties of christianity to be invented, or imposed upon his churches, by men, whose best wisdom and knowledge are weak, and fallible, and uncertain; and their authority so doubtful and questionable, or rather so null and void, as to any inventions and impositions of their own.

Alas, what wretched work would such a supposed authority make in different churches, in the same age? What contentions, and endless confusions, would be raised among christians? What different and contrary opinions, and ceremonies, and forms of worship and practice, would be imposed on distinct churches, and all called by the christian name? Has not the whole church of *Christ* suffered infinite damage by these pretences?

What mischiefs and strifes, and schisms, would arise in the same churches, by the different sentiments and injunctions of different elders or pastors in the same church? What eternal innovations in churches, as to their faith, worship, and practice, when pastors die successively, and others, of different principles, come in their room? Has not the world seen too much of this already, in every age of the church?

Observe with what zeal *St. Paul*, the greatest of the apostles, exclaims against any such sort of power, even in himself and his fellow-teachers. "What is *Paul*, or what is *Apollos*, or what is *Cephas*, or *Peter*, but servants, or ministers, by whom ye were taught to believe the same gospel, or the same religion and institutions of *Christ*." 1 *Cor.* i. 12. and iii. 5 "We are far from being lords of your faith: We are only the helpers of your joy." 2 *Cor.* i. 24.

As for the lesser things, which *Christ* has commanded, and which are necessary to be determined some way or other in a church, as in any other human society; such as the appointment of the place and hour of meeting, the chusing a president, the method and order of their religious exercises, &c. These must be agreed, or at least consented to, by the society itself. A judge in a court, or a magistrate in a city, has no power to make any new law: His business is only to explain and apply in general the laws that are made, according to the best of his understanding: And after all, it is a jury of twelve men, in our national courts of justice, that determines the affair with regard to particular things or persons. So ministers in the church are not lords or sovereigns in *Christ's* kingdom: They, in their highest character, can be supposed to be set up but as judges, to explain his laws, and apply them to rising occasions, and shew men how "to do all things decently and orderly;" 1 *Cor.* xii. 40. but in many cases of church-affairs, it is the people that must actually apply them to particular persons or occurrences. Ministers have not any dominion given them, either over our faith or practice.

It may be observed also, that the names which are given to ministers in scripture, do not signify sovereign rule and authority: Their name is ministers, or servants, and they are never called lords, or commanders, but leaders, presidents, stewards, shepherds, teachers, elders, overseers, &c. all which intimate a limited authority, and not supreme power\*.

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E

But

\* Governments is the strongest word of authority used to denote any office in the christian church, and that is but one. 1 *Cor.* xii. 28. And some learned men are of opinion, this name signifies deacons, whose government reached not to the faith or conscience, but they distributed and disposed of the money wisely, which



But as many writers among the *Puritans* and *Nonconformists* have handled this matter abundantly in the last age, so the reverend and learned bishop *Hoadley*, in latter years, has happily laboured to guard this prerogative of *Christ* to make laws in his own church, from the usurpations of men; and therefore I insist no further on this particular.

Though the scripture be silent about the extent of the power of particular bishops or elders in a church, yet some may say, does not the light of nature teach us, that many grave and wise persons, the bishops and elders of many churches, meeting together in a synod, or solemn council, may join and make laws, or constitutions, for all the churches under their care? And are not the churches bound to obey? First, I answer,

Answer I. It is granted, that the light of nature would lead the wisest persons sometimes to meet together for mutual advice and counsel; but I know not of any natural or scriptural right, that ministers, joined in a synod, have to make new laws for christian churches; nor have single christians or congregations any right or leave, much less any obligation, to subject themselves and their consciences to such a dominion of men, in things which neither scripture nor nature requires. It is the ready way, by degrees, to put other kings into the kingdom of *Christ*, who alone is sovereign in his church. It is a dangerous thing for christians to give up themselves to the will of fallible men by such a subjection; and they will find, by woeful experience, many things, by degrees, imposed upon them, that will neither suit with their conscience or their conveniency, with their own inclination, or their faithful subjection to *Christ*. What has been the event of this in all ages may justly be again expected, if the same experiment be made. I answer, secondly,

Answer II. If this were once allowed, may not these ministers, thus met together in one nation, upon the same principle, depute some of their number to join with such sort of deputation of christian ministers in other nations, till at last they devolve all their power upon one small assembly or general council, or upon one single person, who may be deputed or appointed to determine for them all? If these sort of deputations carry any authentic power with them, to make laws for conscience, they may be carried on as far as an universal council, or a *Pope*, before they stop, and we are at *Rome* ere we are aware.

You will reply, perhaps, Is there not some encouragement given to the government of the church by assemblies, councils, convocations, or synods of bishops or elders, in that famous chapter, *Acts* xv. where they met about that great question, "Whether the heathen converts should be circumcised or no?"

But the answer to this is very easy: This was not a council of elders or bishops, for here are the brethren of the church at *Jerusalem* joined together with the apostles and elders; and besides, that assembly had so much of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit of God in them, that they could justly pronounce, "It seemed good to the holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden,"—verses 22, 23, 25, 28. Now when persons divinely inspired, as those apostles and elders, and many of the brethren were, shall meet together for such a purpose, I have nothing to say against their determinations. But let ministers in their councils, in later ages, take heed how they assume lordship over conscience, till they are furnished with such gifts, and can make  
such

which the helps just before mentioned, that is, men of wealth and goodness, gave toward the support of the poor. See Mr. *Chandler's* commentary on *Joel*, page 150. Or if these governments imply high authority and power, let it be remembered, it is only mentioned as an office in the days of inspiration, and is joined with apostles, prophets, evangelists, gifts of tongues, &c.

such a divine commission appear, as will warrant them to say, "It appeared good to the holy Ghost and to us, to appoint so and so."

Perhaps it will be replied here, the apostles and inspired persons knew what was the christians duty before, and could have determined this question by their extraordinary gifts, without convening in a council or synod; but probably the providence of God so ordered it, that even inspired apostles should meet and debate this point in a synod, on purpose to teach all succeeding churches what is to be done in such a case, and to shew how their difficulties and controversies should be authoritatively determined by synods, even to the end of the world.

Answer I. And I have as much right to say, perhaps the apostles *Peter* and *James*, &c. did not know this matter so well before, and therefore could not have determined this question without convening in a council; for their divine revelations of many particular things were made to them not all at once, in the days of *Pentecost*, when the holy Spirit came upon them; but this was done by degrees, and at particular seasons, as the occasions of christianity and the churches required it. *Peter* did not know that he must preach the gospel to the heathens several years after that day of *Pentecost*, when the holy Spirit fell upon them in cloven tongues, till a vision from heaven taught it him, when *Cornelius* was directed by an angel to send messengers to call him to *Cæsarea*. And it is probable, God ordained this council to be called, not only to teach the church at *Jerusalem*, as well as the apostles, a full answer to the question in dispute, but to render the unanimous direction and appointment of so many inspired persons more public, more weighty, and efficacious, than the voice of a single apostle would have been in so important a case of controversy between the *jewish* and *gentile* converts.

Answer II. I will allow that providence, perhaps, might appoint this council of wise and knowing men at *Jerusalem* to be convened, to teach the following churches and ages what they should in cases of doubt and difficulty; that is, that they should meet together, and advise with one another, and debate matters freely and sincerely, according to that great rule of human prudence which *Solomon* also teaches us; "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety." *Prov. xi. 14*. And great deference should be paid to the advice of many aged, learned, and pious men, met in council. But if no inspired men are among them, they can only draw up their conclusion thus; "It seemed good to us, fallible men, to give our opinion or advice so or so;" but not to determine absolutely for other persons, and make rules to bind the consciences of others, unless they could add, "It seemed good to the holy Spirit also, as well as unto us;" for if the vote of a council of fallible men could bind us, why should not the council of *Trent*, or any other councils, bind us to all their antichristian decrees? The best constituted church or council may in time grow degenerate, and if they have such authority given them, they may make heathenish or hellish decrees, and bind them on the consciences of men.

Answer III. And yet further, in the third place, I add, if this decree at *Jerusalem* had not been the direction and determination of the holy Spirit, by the lips of inspired men, why should the churches at *Antioch*, *Syria*, and *Cilicia* *Acts xv. 23*. submit to a vote or opinion of the church at *Jerusalem*, any more than the church at *Jerusalem* should submit to an opinion of the church at *Corinth*, or *Rome*, or *Antioch*? What was done at *Jerusalem* by inspired men once, on an extraordinary occasion, cannot be made a binding example or rule, for the determination of conscience in all following times, and in ordinary church-affairs, where no inspired persons are present;



for by this precedent, one church would have power given it to determine for another; which I know no church pretends to, but that of *Rome*.

And finally, It is plain, if this scripture give authority to uninspired men in ordinary cases, it gives this dominion to the whole church at *Jerusalem*, and not to the bishops or elders only; for this was not a council made up of the elders, bishops or representatives of the churches of *Jerusalem*, *Antioch*, *Syria*, and *Cilicia*, but of the apostles, elders, and brethren of the church at *Jerusalem*; and yet they authoritatively determined the case for the churches of the gentiles, which they should never have done, if there had been no apostles or inspired persons there.

Whatsoever therefore the church at *Jerusalem* determined as a duty for the gentile churches to practise in a dubious case, because it had apostles, and many inspired persons in it, can be no sufficient authority for synods, convocations, or councils of bishops or elders of modern churches, to determine other dubious cases, for their own or other congregations, and bind their consciences to any point of faith or practice merely by their authority, when they have no inspired persons among them. But I only glance at these things, and will not enter into a debate about them at present.

VI. Though baptism and the Lord's supper are ceremonies of divine institution, yet is not the new testament in a great measure silent as to the persons who shall celebrate them?

I answer, the scripture acquaints us, that the commission to baptize was plainly given here to those who were appointed to teach the nations. *Matth. xxviii. 20*. And the light of nature shews us, that those persons who are furnished with talents, and chosen, and called, and solemnly appointed to preach the gospel to men, to offer up their prayers and praises to God, and to lead the worship in churches, are certainly, in the nature of things, the most proper persons to administer or celebrate such rites or ordinances, as should be attended with the word and prayer; for "by the word and prayer is every thing sanctified" to it's proper purposes in the kingdom of *Christ*. *1 Tim. iv. 5*.

And yet, if no ministers, elders, or bishops, are near at hand, nor the ministrations of any such are to be obtained, without sinful compliances, perhaps it may be better that some private member of that congregation, if sufficiently furnished with proper gifts, should be deputed or desired by the church, to perform these solemnities once or twice, than that these institutions of *Christ*, which are so plain and express, should be omitted for a long time together, merely on account of doubtful disputables. *Christ* has most expressly commanded this duty; but who shall administer this ordinance, and how ministers should be ordained, is much more obscure. If a congregation want a regular minister, yet the church should assemble for prayer; and exhortation or teaching, by reading or preaching should not be utterly neglected: Why then should they neglect the Lord's supper? If a neighbouring minister cannot conveniently be obtained, may not a brother of the congregation, who has competent abilities, be desired to pray, or to read a sermon, or to exhort, rather than the church be without any public worship, or spend their Lord's-day at home, and that for weeks or months together, for a considerable time? And may not a person thus qualified, if no minister be within reach, be deputed, or called by the church, to break bread to them, rather than live without obeying the express commands of a dying Saviour.

Now I have ventured so far in giving my opinion here, I may the more confidently add, that this should not be practised on every little common occasion, lest great inconveniencies arise thereby: And for this reason, every destitute church should furnish themselves, as soon as may be, with a pastor or minister of their own, to go before

Sect. VI. *Churches formed on the reason of things.*

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before them, and, in a regular manner, celebrate these divine rites of christianity, which ought not to be long neglected.

Some other cases might be mentioned, which may fall out in a christian church, wherein we can find no plain direction or example in scripture; and then reason and prudence must direct us: Where revelation is silent, reason is our guide.

S E C T I O N VI.

*Christian churches formed like civil societies, upon the plain nature and reason of things.*

PERMIT me here to give a little specimen, by way of similitude, how naturally a christian church is formed, when we suppose there are several christians within the reach and knowledge of one another, in this sinful world. It is raised in the same manner as any other civil society may be formed among men, especially among several natives of one country meeting together in a foreign land: And while I am representing their procedure, you may carry your thoughts of the formation and constitution of a christian church along with you in the simile, and apply it all the way.

Suppose three or four *englishmen*, who have their residence in a city of *China*, happen to meet one another, and by conversation, finding that they speak the same language, they make it known to each other, that they are natives of the same country; they all profess allegiance to the same king, *GEORGE* the second; and, though they sojourn for a season in a foreign land, and are engaged in many secular affairs there, yet they declare their resolution to behave as becomes *englishmen*, while they are waiting for a call from their sovereign to return home. They hereupon agree to meet once a week, in order to converse about the affairs of their own nation, to learn some tidings from it, to pay some special honours to their absent king, to learn further notices of his will, and to prepare for their return homeward.

The day which they appoint for their assembly, is the day of the accession of their king to the throne, in it's weekly return: The place is also agreed among them, such as may be convenient for their frequent attendance.

Other *englishmen*, who are in that city, hearing of this society, come to their assembly, one after another, and desire acquaintance with their countrymen and brethren: They make it appear, that they are natives of the same land, that they own the same sovereign, that they are doing his will, and preparing to return home at his orders: And, in the mean time, they desire the privilege of being admitted into their society. Upon such a profession, and by the approbation of the society, they are received into this *english* fellowship with pleasure.

Now it is not to be supposed, that every one of them is capable of taking proper care of the best interests of this society, nor of speaking in an instructive and profitable manner concerning the things that relate to their native country, their laws, and rules of conduct; their king, and their common design of a return. They agree therefore to chuse one person amongst them, who shall devote himself to this work, shall study the laws of their country, the rules of the proper behaviour of *englishmen*, and the mind and will of their king: One who shall present their common allegiance to their sovereign, in frequent addresses sent to *England*, and shall spend a hour or two every week, in setting before them what honours they owe to the king of *England*, what are the blessings of their native home, what are their duties



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lives in a foreign land, what dangers they are exposed to among the heathen *chinese*, and how they may best avoid them; what are the enjoyments they expect at their return, and the best methods of preparation for it. This man accepts the office, and by a solemn vow of allegiance to the king, and faithfulness to his countrymen in this trust, he enters upon his office.

Besides this, once in a month, suppose they meet together, according to an appointment of their prince, to eat a morsel of bread, and drink a glass of wine together, in memory of some great benefit which the whole nation of *England* received by a difficult and bloody enterprize of the king's son, when in former years, he took a voyage from *England* to *China*; and they keep up this feast in honour to his name, wherein the provisions, after a short speech, are distributed to every member of the society, by the person whom they have appointed to instruct them in *english* affairs.

Now because this man spends a great part of his time in letters or dispatches to *England*, and in the study of *english* affairs, that he may the better entertain the assembly of his brethren at their solemn weekly meetings, the community agree to release him from the secular businesses of life, and join their liberality to maintain him with honour.

But here let it be observed, that though they pay so much respect to the person whom they chuse to be their instructor, and to go before them in the honours due to their king, yet they do not entrust him to invent any new ceremony to testify their allegiance, nor to impose on them any new law or custom, but what he can find prescribed among the laws of their nation, and appointments of the king, or of his ambassadors to *China*. In these matters indeed, he may require obedience in the name of their king; but in all other things he must act according to the agreement or opinion of the society; which must be testified by the vote of the major part.

Among this community, some happen to be aged, or sick, or disabled for work; or they are fallen into poverty, and their circumstances are sunk in the world, notwithstanding their diligence and labour: These are not capable of maintaining themselves; the society therefore cheerfully contribute toward their support: And they entrust two or three persons with this money, and desire them to take care that the table of the poor be supplied. They entrust also with these persons what money they collect for the honourable maintenance of their teacher; and desire them to take care, that every thing necessary toward their weekly meetings at a certain time, and at a convenient place, be provided at their public charge. They go on in this manner with much comfort and mutual assistance, in every thing that relates to their welfare in a foreign land; and rejoice in their hope to meet one day in *England*.

And as they are ever adding to their society by admitting new members, upon their credible profession and appearance to be true *britons*, in the room of such as are yearly called home; so if any among them prove to be false and insincere, and are guilty of crimes highly disgraceful to their profession of being natives of *England*, and their allegiance to their king, they have no other punishment for them besides that they are cut off from the society, and forbid to enjoy the privileges thereof any longer.

Now it is so very easy to apply these transactions of *englishmen* in *China* to the affairs of a christian church, that I hardly need display the parallel. Christians profess to be natives of heaven, to be born from above: They sojourn for a season in the world as in a foreign land, till their father and king summon them home. They speak the language of the gospel, or of the kingdom of heaven, and understand it; and they know each other hereby: They agree to meet together to worship their king, and pay allegiance to him; to learn more of his will, and seek his favour. The day

day of their solemn assemblies is the day of the resurrection of *Christ*, the Son of God, and their Lord. When they do special honours to him, they eat bread and drink wine, to solemnize the memory of their deliverance from sin and hell; when he was sent into the world to die for them. Then, by calling away their hearts from this world, and conversing about heavenly things, they are continually preparing for their return home. They chuse one or more teachers, pastors, or bishops, to instruct them in their duty, and to offer up their common addresses to God, in the name of *Christ*; to put them in mind of the things of heaven, and to walk before them in exemplary holiness. They chuse deacons to relieve the poor, out of their public liberality, as well as to take care that their pastors or teachers be maintained. They receive in new members who are worthy, upon their profession; and they cast out those that are dishonourable. They walk onward in this way toward the heavenly state; and wait the summons from on high, to call them thither by death and the resurrection.

## S E C T I O N VII.

*The several advantages of such a church, or christian society.*

SO natural a scheme of social religion as this, does not need long and express forms of institution, after the great doctrines and duties of the christian faith and life are plainly revealed and received. All that is found in the new testament relating to christian churches, so happily corresponds with these dictates of the light of nature, and the affairs of the civil life, that it has made these rules much more plain, and easy, and practicable, than those of the *jewish* religion, or perhaps of any other religion, that pretends to divine revelation. This scheme is built on the eternal reasons and relations of things, as well as the word of God. The particular positive prescriptions relating to christian churches are but few, while the general duties of christian fellowship are such as the light of nature and reason seem to dictate to all societies whatsoever. It is the evil mixture of the needless and fanciful inventions of men, together with the plain and common dictates of nature and scripture, and the impositions of these inventions on conscience, which hath done so much injury to christianity, defaced it's beauty, and tarnished it's honours.

H. This scheme is perfectly consistent with every form and kind of civil government, whether it be a kingdom, a senate, or a republic. As it does not mingle itself with the interests of this world, nor assume to itself any civil or coercive power, so it can make no head against the governors of the country; for it's power is of another kind, and reaches but to one single society of christians: Nor are they combined by any law of *Christ*, in such united multitudes, under one common visible head, as to make themselves dangerous to any state. Whatsoever hath been done in the world by men professing christianity, in a way of resistance to lawful governors, or rebellions against them, hath never been done by them as churches of *Christ*, formed upon the model I have laid down.

III. This form of a christian church allows to all it's members the most perfect liberty of men and christians. It is inconsistent with persecution for conscience sake; for it leaves all civil rewards and preferments, penalties and punishments, to kingdoms,



doms, and states, and the governors of this world. It pretends to no power over conscience, to compel men to obedience; no prisons, no axes, fire, nor sword. It gives it's ministers power and authority to command nothing but what is found in the bible: All other things must be determined by the consent of the people, who are supposed to be led by common prudence, by the necessary reason of things, and by a vote of the major part of the society. But if in any of these things, particular persons, after all proper enquiries, cannot agree with the major part, they may make their remonstrances, and be dismissed, if they cannot continue there with tolerable satisfaction; or they may withdraw to another congregation, if they are aggrieved, and the society refuse to dismiss them.

I confess, those christians who differ from the major part of the congregation should seriously examine themselves, whether their disagreement doth not arise from any pique, or prejudice, or worldly interest, or humour, or obstinate self-will; and, in some particulars, they should deny themselves, rather than divide themselves, from a society whose communion they have long enjoyed: More especially, they should take heed of this in the country, where they have not conveniency of holding communion with other christian societies. And even where they have such opportunities and conveniencies, persons should not indulge a fickle humour, nor run wandering about from place to place, and fluttering from one church to another, upon every little difference. But after all, it must be acknowledged, there may be several just and reasonable grounds for particular christians to separate from a society, from which they differ in some sentiments or transactions, though they still continue to acknowledge them to be a true church of *Christ*. Such a liberty as this must be still maintained; for christian churches must have all voluntary members, and not be turned into prisons.

If any person sins so grossly against the plain rules of the gospel, or the laws of God or *Christ*, as to appear to renounce the characters of a christian, the church hath power only to renounce such a person, and disclaim all christian fellowship with him, and turn him into the world, which is the kingdom of *Satan*, till he repent: But they have no authority to hurt his life or limbs; to touch a hair of his head, nor a penny of his money, by way of punishment.

IV. By such sort of churches as these, christianity is more easily maintained in single and secret assemblies, if the powers of this world favour them not; for there is no need of large multitudes assembling together for any ordinances of worship, or for discipline; no need of any such public appearances or transactions, as may give any unnecessary umbrage or suspicion to persecuting enemies: There is no need of councils and synods of ministers of distant cities, to meet together to make laws for the church, or to rectify disorders there: Nor is there any need to travel over large counties or diocesses, to fetch a rightful ordination of a minister for any church; much less to take a journey to *Rome*, if all the ministers in a nation were dead, or departed from the faith. If the whole society, which was wont to meet together, cannot do it under a persecuting prince, for fear of exposing themselves to public injury, they may assemble in smaller parties, and their preachers may teach, and pray, and administer all ordinances among them, as it was often done in the primitive times, maintaining their christian fellowship by secret meetings: And they may all be called little churches, in the house. By such single congregations, larger or smaller, was the whole church of *Christ* in the world continued and increased, the first two or  
three

three hundred years, whensoever the powers of this world took it into their heads to persecute and destroy the professors of the christian faith.

Perhaps it may be objected here, would it not be a much more substantial and powerful way of maintaining christian churches, if these single congregations, by virtue of their ministers or elders, were combined together in some sacred bond of union, that might make a considerable body of people under such heads or leaders, or under one supreme head, who might better defend them against the invasion of their rites by any, secular powers or persecuting princes?

To this I answer, that churches of *Christ* considered as such, have no secular power in themselves, nor authority to make any efforts against secular powers: But when men become christians, or members of churches, they do not divest themselves of any secular or civil rights or powers which they had before: And therefore when natural or civil liberties are unjustly and cruelly invaded by any of the men of this world, they by the laws of nature have a just right, as men, to defend themselves; and no ecclesiastical combinations can give them any further right or power than what they have as men: And this belongs to them still, whatsoever religion they profess, whether natural or revealed, whether pagan, *mahometan*, or christian. A professor of every religion has a right to be protected by the government as long as he maintains his allegiance to the governors, and does no injury to the state. But if governors will not protect him, but will give him up to the fury of persecutors, he has certainly a civil right to defend himself and his friends against all assaults and injuries.

V. Miscarriages in the government, or conduct of such a church as I have described, are less dangerous to christianity; because they affect but one single congregation, they reach but to one society. Those ecclesiastical governments which include vast numbers and multitudes combined under one or more spiritual heads or rulers, if there be any misrule and confusion brought in among them, it involves multitudes in the mischief of it, and sometimes shakes or destroys whole nations. But if a government which is included within one single congregation be never so much divided by contentions, and fall into the greatest confusions, the mischief is not of so large an extent, nor can it have so fatal and dreadful consequences. If the congregation itself should be actually dissolved by these constitutions, the particular members of it may depart and join themselves to other congregations within their reach or neighbourhood, who are nearest of their own opinion, and walk with them in a religious and peaceful fellowship, which they could not well do before, because of such different opinions and divided spirits.

VI. Such single societies or churches so constituted are most happily suited to maintain and carry on the great purposes and designs of the gospel, for the conversion of sinners, and the edification of true christians. Of this matter see the learned doctor *Owen's* enquiry into the original of churches, chapter vi. page 119. See also sermons at *Berry-street*, sermon xlix.

Upon the whole, whensoever it shall appear that any other form of a christian church is more happily suited to the edification and peace of christians, to the preservation of christian liberty, and to secure the spiritual honours which belong to *Christ* in his churches, and at the same time appears to have more countenance from the new testament than this, I shall be glad to relinquish this set of sentiments, and with pleasure exchange it for a better. That is certainly the best form of a christian



church, whereby truth, peace and holiness may be most happily promoted and secured.

## S E C T I O N VIII.

*Of the power of churches to appoint holy things or actions.*

Question **W**HETHER a christian church may not appoint or determine circumstances and ceremonies of worship and order, which are left undetermined in the new testament, and require them to be observed?

Answer. In the primitive churches there were extraordinary gifts and powers communicated to them: There were apostles, evangelists and inspired leaders and guides; but since these extraordinary gifts and powers are ceased, reason and scripture are our only rules. It is upon this foot every christian church, or every single society of christians, "receiving one another in the Lord" as *St. Paul* speaks, *Rom xvi. 2.* that is, agreeing to worship and walk together according to the faith and order of the gospel, when it is furnished with it's proper officers, that is, a bishop, or bishops and deacons, is the highest ecclesiastical power that I know of in this world, which has plain evidence and support in the word of God, or the necessary reason of things. Yet I cannot find that either the light of reason or scripture has given such a church, or it's officers, any authority to invent and use, to appoint and command new ceremonies of divine worship in any case: Nor has it a right to impose on the consciences of men any such self-invented modes or circumstances of worship, so as to make them holy things, or to oblige any single christian to comply therewith.

But to speak a little more particularly to this matter. We must distinguish between the religious ceremonies of worship, and the mere natural circumstances of the performance of it.

Natural circumstances are such as are necessary, or at least highly expedient, for the performance of acts of worship, considered merely as natural actions, and abstracted from their religious design. Such are time, place, habit, gesture, &c. for no natural action can be put forth but it must be in some time, or in some place, in some posture of body; nor can any transaction in public society be conveniently performed without some sort of garments, without a commodious place and seasonable hours for assembling: These in their own nature are properly no parts of worship or religion, but circumstances belonging to those actions considered merely as natural, and as the actions of natural and sociable creatures.

Among these natural circumstances of actions in social worship, some are necessary to be determined one certain way, and others are not so.

The circumstances necessary to be determined one certain way, are the time and place, the language, and something of the manner or order of the religious actions, &c.

Now where these are not determined by God himself, it is granted they must be determined by every worshipping society for themselves; for they must agree what hour to meet together, what place to meet in, what language \* shall be used in the worship, whether they shall begin or end the worship with the Lord's supper,  
or

\* Always excepting those primitive times, when various languages were used as an extraordinary confirmation of the gospel of *Christ*. But in ordinary seasons of worship the assembly must know and agree before hand, that it must be performed in a language which they understand.

or with a psalm or song, who shall minister in holy things: Whether there shall be any responses of the congregation to the words of him that officiates in prayer, or whether amen shall be pronounced aloud, or whether a silent assent be sufficient. Where God hath not determined these things, I do not find that he hath ever given authority to any person to determine these for other persons, or any society of men to determine them for other societies; but they must be determined by an agreement or vote of every society for itself. As in several of these things there must be a concurrence or agreement to make any solemn and constant meetings and transactions of a civil society, peaceful and useful, regular and orderly, so are the same things needful to be agreed upon in a christian church to render the worship of every single society practicable and edifying, harmonious, agreeable, and decent.

And since these things are necessary to be determined one way, if some few persons in the society will not consent to the agreement of the major part of them, they must depart and join themselves to some other society which is more for their convenience. Such are the various tempers, engagements, sentiments, inclinations and conveniencies of different persons, that there would be a great bar put upon the frequent meetings of any large society for any civil or religious purposes, if they must not meet and transact any affairs till every single person be perfectly pleased. If therefore the minor part cannot, or will not consent to what the bulk of the society agree upon, here is no imposition upon their consciences, while they are allowed to join themselves with other societies, civil or religious, where these necessary and disputed circumstances are agreed and practised more according to their mind.

The circumstances which are not necessary to be determined one way, are the postures or gestures of the body, the garments of the preacher, or of him that prays, of fingers or hearers, &c. and these every person may determine for himself: Some may have a blue garment, while others have red or brown, black or white; some may wear a long coat, others a short one; some may stand in prayer, others kneel if they will; some may chuse to stand in singing or preaching, while others may chuse to sit in the same society.

I must confess there seems to be something of a natural decency in the uniformity of some of these circumstances, especially that of gesture, in one and the same congregation, in some particular parts of worship, as standing in prayer, &c. but no such necessity of such a uniformity as to give power to any person or society to determine for every single worshipper, and oblige him to obey.

If any whole church, or a multitude of churches in a nation will chuse to agree in any particular practice, it is well; or if they can persuade every person to consent to the same: But if some persons will presume to determine all these circumstances one way, and will impose them upon their fellow-christians by a pretended authority, they go beyond the bounds that either the light of nature or scripture allows, and assume such a power over the consciences of men as I cannot find the chapter and verse where it was given them; for these circumstances being left indifferent in themselves, in the nature of things, and in scripture, they are not necessary to be determined one way for a whole society, and much less should all this society be obliged in conscience to comply with such an imposition.

Having given such an account of the natural circumstances of social worship, let us enquire what are religious ceremonies.

Religious ceremonies are either real actions, or modes and circumstances of action by which some special honour is designed to be paid to God, and therefore God alone can institute them, who alone can determine what shall be honourable to himself.



These have generally a signification of something inward and invisible annexed to them: But whether we can learn what they signify or no, still there is a holiness and a necessity placed in them by the divine appointment; and therefore man cannot appoint them, nor add to them, because he cannot put holiness into any thing, nor make any thing holy or sinful, which God has not made so.

Some of these religious ceremonies are real actions, and entirely divine institutions or sacred appointments of service, which are in no wise necessary to natural actions, nor should ever have been practised, if God had not positively enjoined them: Others in their abstracted nature antecedent to the divine command, were but mere natural circumstances of action; yet when thus determined particularly by God, they become as it were parts of our religion, and our worship.

Circumcision, offering of sacrifices, slaying and eating the passover, burning of incense, lighting the lamps, sprinkling of blood, divers washings, the use of the instruments of musick in the temple, &c. seem to be of the first sort, viz. such real religious actions and ceremonies of pure divine institution, as were by divine appointment imposed upon the ancient church.

Others are of the second sort, among which may be reckoned the places or spots of ground, perhaps where the tabernacle and temple stood, the holy times, such as sabbaths, new moons, and other festivals, the attire or vesture of the priests who officiate, &c. These were but modes and circumstances of action made necessary to the *jewish* worshippers, ordained to be holy, and converted into religious ceremonies.

Under the new testament the ceremonies distinct from natural religion, whether real actions or mere modes and circumstances of action, are few and easy, such as the washing with water in baptism, and eating bread and wine at the supper of the Lord, to which we may add the observation of the first day of the week in memory of our risen Saviour.

Any of the circumstances or modes of action which belong to these religious rites, which are not determined by scripture, and are not necessary to be determined one way in order to social worship, must be left indifferent to every worshipper, according as his conscience or his convenience shall direct. I know not any text where God has given any man, or set of men, any power to impose on others. See these things happily set forth at large in doctor *Calamy's* excellent discourse, called an "Introduction to the second part of moderate non-conformity;" of which I am informed, that Mr. *Locke* himself should say upon the perusal of it, that while the protestant dissenters kept close to these principles, they would sufficiently maintain their ground, and justify their separation from any established national church, if that church should assume an authority to impose things which ought to be left indifferent.

Surely the fourteenth chapter to the *Romans* lays a foundation for this christian liberty, and forbids to impose on conscience the observation of meats or days, and in general all impositions of this kind. The apostle, while he handles this subject, had no order to impose or forbid these practices on the *Romans*, to whom he wrote. He leaves every man to use his own "liberty in the gospel, nor be entangled with any fresh yokes of bondage;" *Gal. v. 1.* supposing always that the light of nature and common reason will keep all sober christians within the bounds of human decency, common prudence and civility; and that a preference be given to such modes, and gestures, and seasons, which seem to be patronized by the examples mentioned in scripture.

The custom also of the holiest and purest churches may have some influence to direct our practice, in such affairs of small importance where we cannot find any other rule of determination, either from the light of nature or scripture. The apostle *Paul* seems to give this advice to the *Corinthians* in the business of wearing the hair  
long

long or short, 1 Cor. xi. 14, 15. For after he had offered some reason on one side from the mere light of nature and decency, he adds, verse 16. "that if any man seem to be contentious, that is, be not satisfied with my arguments and persist in contending about this matter, we have no such customs, nor the churches of God:" That is, let him be determined by the custom of us the apostles, and of other christian churches; let him not affect a singularity in things of less moment, nor give offence to the generality of the most serious and pious professors of the same faith in such little things as these are.

But if any man, or any society of men, shall assume so much to themselves, as to pretend a divine authority to confine other churches and christians to a most exquisite uniformity in every punctilio that relates to religion and circumstances of worship, even in things which God has not appointed, they throw us back again into a sort of *Judaism*, and make and impose new yokes of bondage; they pretend to bind what *Christ* has made free, and seem to usurp his prerogative: A pretence to such power appears to me to be the very spring and spirit of antichristianism; there is the foundation for papacy laid, though it has not arisen yet to an universal supremacy, to an infallible chair, and a triple crown. See pages 23—26.

All christians are bound by the new testament to worship one God, even God the Father who dwells in heaven, in the name of one mediator *Jesus Christ*, by the aids or operations of one Spirit, they are bound to be baptized into these names, and to remember the death of *Christ* in the holy supper, to trust in the promises of the gospel, and to practise the precepts of it in an uniform life of holiness. This is evident and certain, and perhaps this may be thought almost sufficient to maintain the unity of the christian church. But still let it be observed, that where christians are fallen into very different opinions in any important matters of doctrine or duty, or where their sentiments are so extremely divided, and perhaps contrary to each other in matters of worship and order, that they cannot agree and join in the same forms and modes of divine service, or where they have not charity enough to bear with each other's differences in things of less moment, they ought not to force themselves, nor to be forced into one society or church; but they should join themselves to such distinct societies as are nearest of their own mind; for their edification in faith, holiness and love, is one great and chief end of church fellowship.

Though the men of *Israel* were bound by law to join three times a year to worship God who dwelt in the temple or tabernacle by the appointed sacrifices of the passover, *Pentecost*, &c. yet they were not bound by any law of God to attend that synagogue which was nearest to their own dwelling, where prayer and praise was performed, and instructions and exhortations given to the people. Herein they had, or they should have had, liberty to chuse their fellow-worshippers and the synagogue where they would worship, if they had any scruple upon their consciences about the practices of that which was nearest to them. And the same liberty belongs to christians in every age and nation.

To force all christians into the same church, whose understandings and opinions point different ways, and to bind them together in an outward form of fellowship with their minds so much divided, is the way to increase their differences, to kindle their fire with more fierceness, and awaken their wrath to a higher degree, till they grow mad against each other and ruin the church. It is like tying *Sampson's* foxes together by the tail with firebrands between them, while their heads stand contrary ways, and then inclosing them all with a strong fence in one field: There they will unavoidably snarl and rage against one another; they will draw different ways, and diffuse their fire and wrath till they have burnt up the field, and destroyed a lovely harvest.

THE



T H E  
T E R M S  
O F  
CHRISTIAN COMMUNION,

Humbly proposed to the

CHURCHES of CHRIST,

W I T H

An Attempt towards the SOLUTION of various Questions  
and Cases of Conscience, arising from this Subject.

Q U E S T I O N I.

*What is christian communion? And what are the general and agreed terms of it?*

CHRISTIAN communion in the sense of scripture, is that communion or fellowship which christians have with God the Father, and our Lord *Jesus Christ*, or with one another; and both are joined together by the apostle *John*, 1 *John* i. 3. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship, or communion, with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son *Jesus Christ*."

This communion or fellowship in the spiritual and invisible part of it consists in a participation of the favour of God, the spiritual benefits of *Christ*, and the invisible and

Quest. I. *What is christian communion, and the general terms of it?* 39

and everlasting blessings of the gospel. But this is not our present subject of discourse.

The visible fellowship or communion that christians have with each other, consists chiefly in the "participation of the spiritual ordinances of the gospel, and mutual assistances for the good of each other.

The special ordinances of the gospel are chiefly these two, baptism and the Lord's supper."

Baptism is an ordinance appointed by *Christ*, for our entrance into the visible church; and when once performed is never to be repeated.

The Lord's supper is an ordinance appointed by *Christ* after we are entered into the church, for the assistance and increase of our faith and hope, our comfort and holiness; and ought to be as often repeated as christians have proper opportunity: It represents our communion with the Lord *Jesus Christ* in his death, and the benefits which are derived from it, such as the pardon of sin through his sacrifice of atonement, &c. and it represents also our communion with one another in those benefits, or our joint participation thereof, according to the apostle's description of it, 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of *Christ*? We are all partakers of that one bread."

The other parts, privileges, or offices of christian communion, shall be mentioned, when there is need of it, in distinguishing constant and occasional communion.

Now among all the ordinances of worship it is in our partaking of these two, viz. baptism and the Lord's supper, that special christian communion chiefly consists. But when we use the words christian communion, we have most frequently a regard to the Lord's supper, because our communion with one another, and joint participation of the blessings of the gospel, is most plainly represented thereby; and by the frequent repetition of it, our christian communion or holy fellowship is maintained in a more explicit and honourable manner.

Having considered briefly the nature of christian communion, we must enquire now into the general terms of it.

As in order to hold an inward and spiritual communion with *Christ* and his people, we must be sincere believers, or real christians; so every person seeking visible communion with the church of *Christ* should satisfy his own conscience with nothing short of real christianity: But christians and churches not being able to search the heart as *Christ* and conscience can, the term of our visible communion with christians is "a credible profession of real christianity, or a professed subjection to the gospel of *Christ*, as the apostle expresses it," 2 Cor. ix. 13. that is, such an outward profession of inward and hearty christianity, as gives just and credible evidence that this profession is sincere, and that the person thus professing is a hearty christian: Rom. x. 9, 10. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord *Jesus*, and shalt believe in thy heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." If a man profess christianity in any manner or form of profession soever, and yet make it plainly and openly appear by other parts of his conduct, that his profession is not sincere and hearty, he has no right to salvation according to this text, and has always been deemed unworthy of christian communion in all the scripture history, and in the best and purest ages of the church. Those that "profess they know God, but in works deny him are to be counted abominable amongst all christians." Tit. i. 16.

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It is not therefore real and inward christianity in the heart that can give any man a right to communion in outward ordinances, unless it be professed in a credible manner to the world; nor can the want of such real and inward religion exclude any person from communion while he makes such a credible profession, for God only is the judge of hearts and not man, we must act according to outward appearances: There will be hypocrites in the church of *Christ* in this world, and there is no help for it: "The wheat and tares will grow together in the same field till the time of harvest." *Matth. xiii. 30.* The day of judgment is the only time to decide the matter completely, and distinguish hypocrites for ever from real christians; and therefore all that have the credible form and appearance of christianity must be admitted into the church of *Christ* on earth.

This is the common sentiment and practice of all the reformed churches, "that a credible profession is the general term of communion," though they differ about some particular circumstances of this profession that go to make up the credibility of it. These things are so generally acknowledged by the most and best of writers of our day, that I shall not stay here to prove them, and my business in this discourse is with those christians that allow and acknowledge what I have already said.

Now a credible profession of christianity implies these two things. First, that the matter professed be of such a nature, and declared in such a manner, as may render the profession credible; and, secondly, there must also be some person or persons to whom that profession must appear credible, and who must be judges of the credibility of it.

I shall begin with the last of these and dispatch it soon, because I mention it only as a needful introduction to the chief questions relating to the particular terms of christian communion.

## Q U E S T I O N    I I.

*[Who are the proper judges of the credibility of our profession.]*

### S E C T I O N    I.

**J**ESUS *Christ* in his word is the supreme judge of what is truth, and what is duty; what sort of persons ought to be admitted to christian communion, and who should be forbid. But as he is absent from us, and speaks not but by his word, and his word does not apply it's own rules to particular persons, *John, Thomas, William, &c.* in every age and nation, there is a necessity that some persons must judge and determine whether *John, Thomas, William, &c.* have these characters of worthy communicants, which *Christ* has appointed in his word.

Every man for himself must use his own best judgment in searching his heart, and trying himself by the word of God, whether he has complied with the terms of salvation, and he must judge for himself too whether it be his duty to propose himself to christian communion: But no man must determine for himself whether he shall be received to communion with others, and partake of their sacreds. No man can im-

pose

pose himself upon a church, merely because he thinks himself qualified : This would lay all the garden of *Christ* waste again, throw down all the fences, and reduce it to a mere wilderness : This supposition is too wild to be admitted.

If therefore a credible profession of christianity be the term of communion appointed by *Christ* in his word, there must be some present and living judges of the credibility of this profession ; and I know not who can be so proper to judge as those persons with whom communion is desired. This is not a matter transacted merely between a minister and a single christian, for the Lord's supper is not to be administered but in a community ; as *1 Cor.* xi. 20, 21, 33. "The church must come together to one place, and they must tarry for one another." There must be therefore the consent of the community or society, to admit a person to share in and partake of the sacred things in communion with them. This ordinance of *Christ* represents the communion of his members in one body, by the one bread and one cup, *1 Cor.* x. 16, 17. And the duties of church-fellowship, to which we then engage ourselves, are mutual duties between a community or society of christians, therefore there must be a consent on both sides ; and as a person must judge concerning the society, whether he will join himself to them, so the society must judge concerning him, whether they think him fit to be received as one of them.

It is into union with that society that the person proposing himself is to be admitted, either in a constant or occasional way ; and they give him the leave and privilege of becoming a partner with them, or a member of their body ; and surely the light of nature tells us, that every voluntary society must judge who shall be members of their society, and enjoy fellowship with them in their peculiar privileges.

It must be confessed indeed, that where this voluntary society professes a subjection to the will and law of any sovereign or superior power, and this sovereign has given them a rule whereby they are bound to admit persons into their society, in this case, their own mere arbitrary will and pleasure cannot violate or neglect this rule without guilt ; nor can they appoint any new rules, and make them necessary terms and conditions of such admission : And this is the case of all christian churches. For though they are so many voluntary societies, yet *Christ* their common Lord and sovereign has appointed the general rule of admitting members into his churches, viz. that "all such shall be admitted who make a credible profession of christianity."

But wheresoever there is such a superior acknowledged rule given to direct in this affair, still the society itself must judge concerning the true sense and just application of this rule to particular cases. It is this society that will suffer reproach, and bear the trouble of it, if a person admitted, prove scandalous and unworthy ; and it is but reasonable therefore that they should determine whether he be a person fit and worthy to come among them or no ; but still according to the rules of *Christ*, so far as they can understand his meaning. And as this is the voice and language of common reason, so it is also the appointment of *Christ* in his word, and this was the practice of the primitive times, as I shall shew hereafter.

The society ought surely to have the same liberty which the proposed person has, and if he has liberty to judge whether he should seek communion with them, they ought to have liberty to judge whether they should receive him. Each has a right to judge of the sense and application of the rules of scripture to direct their own actions.

Now since there can be no regular or proper christian communion held and maintained but in and with a church of *Christ*, we must enquire into the nature of the



christian church to find out which are the persons in, or of this church, that must judge and declare others fit for communion with it.

SECTION II. The church of *Christ* is either visible or invisible. The invisible church includes all the real saints that are in heaven or on earth. But our question has not to do with the church in this sense.

The whole visible church of *Christ* upon earth, consists of all those persons in the world that make a visible and credible profession of the christian religion, however scattered through all nations, and whether joined together by mutual agreement in particular societies, or not. The new testament sometimes useth the word church in this sense, *Matth.* xvi. 18. *1 Cor.* xii. 28. and other places; and it is in this sense when a person is baptized, he is said to be received into the christian church, for hereby he becomes a member of the catholic church visible on earth.

But all this vast scattered multitude can never maintain and perform acts of christian communion together in the Lord's supper, which is the other chief ordinance of special communion: Nor indeed can they keep up the public honour of God, a public profession of the name of *Christ*, nor the duties of public worship, without their being divided into particular societies, which agree at stated times and seasons to come together to one place, as the apostle expresses it, for purposes of christian worship, *1 Cor.* xi. 18, 20. and xiv. 23.

Such "a society or congregation of persons, both men and women, making a credible profession of christianity, and united by mutual agreement or consent to meet together usually at the same time and place for the performance of christian worship," is a church of *Christ*; and this is the clearest and plainest notion that I can frame of a particular church of *Christ*, according to the language of the holy scripture. Consult the book of *Acts*, consult the sacred epistles, where the word church is used at least forty or fifty times in this sense.

I will not deny but the word church, even where it does not signify the catholic church, visible or invisible, may in some few places be used for a larger number of christians than could meet in one place, as the church of *Jerusalem* in the very beginning of christianity, while christians multiplied faster than they could be well formed into regular distinct societies; yet even in some of those places perhaps it includes no more than did meet for some special purpose. See *Acts* xi. 22. and xv. 22.

The word church may also in a few other places be used for a smaller collection of christians, that might occasionally meet, or perhaps dwell together, as the "church in the house of *Aquila* and *Priscilla*," *1 Cor.* xvi. 19. and in the house of *Philemon*, *Philem.* verse 2.

But the most common acceptation of the word church, where it signifies a visible company of christians, implies such a number, as met usually by common consent in one place for christian communion, in stated and solemn ordinances of worship, and especially the Lord's supper, as in the forecited texts of the epistle to the *Corinthians* and many others.

This is the church that is described in the nineteenth article of the church of *England*, viz. "A congregation of faithful men in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered, according to *Christ*'s ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

Yet let it be noted here, that such a society as this may be properly called a church, when their preachers, ministers, or all their officers are dead, or even before they have

have any minister, or any officers fixed amongst them; and without doubt they have power to receive any person that desires it, and makes credible profession of christianity, into their society, having judged his profession credible, and declared him in their judgment fit for christian communion. But it would lead me too far from my present design to insist upon particular proof of these things, which has been often done, and which is now the pretty general opinion of men that are not attached to any particular party, but give themselves leave to think freely, and follow the dictates of reason and revelation.

SECTION III. The ordinances of the gospel must be administered in a church with decency, and honour, and spiritual advantage: But the whole body of the church cannot thus administer them; therefore it is necessary that these concerns be committed to such persons as are peculiarly fitted for those administrations by knowledge and prudence, and all proper talents; and the church ought to be furnished with such officers who should be chosen and solemnly set apart, devoted and ordained to this work. The particular forms of their choice and ordination do not enter into the present argument.

The business of receiving members into the communion of the church, and the forbidding or excluding of them is a matter of as serious importance as the administration of other christian ordinances; and oftentimes it is attended with great difficulty. A whole assembly of men cannot be supposed to manage this affair altogether with decency and regularity, and without confusion: Therefore it is abundantly convenient, if not necessary, to commit the first and special care of these matters also to particular persons of human and divine knowledge superior to the rest; persons of great skill in the things of God, in serious religion, and in the affairs and tempers of men, qualified with due zeal for the honour and purity of the ordinances and churches of *Christ*, and filled with great tenderness and compassion to the souls of men; persons of good judgment and discretion, of great meekness, condescension and charity, that if possible they may not give occasion to the church to exclude any of the sheep of *Christ* from the visible fold, nor admit unclean animals into the flock.

The chief officers of a particular church, whether they be called bishops, ministers, presbyters, or elders, pastors, guides, leaders, governors or rulers, &c. are the proper persons to have the first oversight and chief care of this matter; and in our churches it is committed chiefly to them, to take account of the profession of christianity made by persons desiring communion, to give some general notices of it to the church, or a more particular narrative where it is desired; and to receive them to communion either with the explicit and formal vote of all the congregation, or only by their implicit and silent consent.

But if it happen that there is but one minister or presbyter in that church, or if the ministers are young men of small experience in the world, it is usual and proper that some of the eldest, gravest and wisest members be deputed by the church to join with and assist the ministers in the care and management of this affair.

Those persons who have been chosen by the church, and have been solemnly devoted by the church, and have also solemnly devoted themselves to that office or service, have been usually called ruling elders. And such officers have been supposed to be described in those words of St. Paul to *Timothy*, 1 *Tim.* v. 17. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour," that is, respect and maintenance: But especially if they are also preachers as well as rulers, "if they labour in the word and

doctrine.



doctrine. These are supposed to be called governments, 1 Cor. xii. 28. and Rom. xii. 8. "He that ruleth"—. But if such persons are but appointed to assist a minister, especially one who is young and unexperienced in the government of the church, I will never quarrel with any man, whether he will call it a divine order, or merely prudential, since the scripture has not determined this matter with uncontested evidence.

These ministers, officers and persons so deputed by the church, are therefore the first proper judges of the credibility of any person professing the christian faith, and desiring communion with that church; for these are supposed to be qualified above others with christian knowledge and wisdom, and they are also appointed by the church to the care and conduct thereof.

Yet in this case they are not so absolute and supreme, but that the congregation must some way or other approve of their judgment, either by an explicit vote, or at least by a silent consent, before the proposed communicant is received to the communion of the church; for it is still the consent of the church that must make him a member of it. Or the congregation may for just reasons disallow of their judgment in particular cases; and if they proceed obstinately to mismanage their affairs of this kind, and especially in notorious instances, and make the terms of admission larger or narrower than *Christ* has appointed, or if they notoriously misapply the right rules of admission or exclusion to wrong persons, that church or society may reverse their sentence, and act according to their own judgment, and if it be needful may also call them to an account for it, and assume the judgment, exclusion and admission of communicants intirely and immediately into their own hands; till they shall chuse other officers who shall preside in this affair, and exercise this power more agreeably to those sacred rules and terms of communion which that society believes to be the will of *Christ* in his word.

SECTION IV. This conduct of affairs seems to be founded on the very nature of religious societies, and the common light of reason; and it seems also to be much countenanced by a variety of scriptures in the new testament, where the directions of the apostle concerning the receiving and excluding of members are addressed to the churches of *Christ* at *Rome*, at *Corinth*, at *Thessalonica*, &c. I might multiply quotations to this purpose, Rom. xv. 7. "Receive ye one another, as *Christ* also received us to the glory of God." Rom. xvi. 1, 2. "I commend unto you *Phebe* our sister,—that ye receive her in the Lord as becometh saints." 1 Cor. v. 4. "In the name of our Lord *Jesus Christ* when ye are gathered together, and my spirit with the power of our Lord *Jesus Christ* to deliver such an one unto *Satan*, &c." Verse 7. "Purge ye out therefore the old leaven." Verse 13. "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." 2 Thess. iii. 6. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly."

Though the apostle *Paul* gives directions to *Timothy* and *Titus* about the rejection of heretics, yet it must be noted that these two were extraordinary persons, evangelists divinely commissioned and endowed, and by virtue hereof might act in a superior way in every church whither they were sent; and they were to teach the churches the orders of *Christ*: Nor does it follow that every ordinary minister has the same power; nor indeed does it appear that *Timothy* and *Titus* were to exercise it without the churches consent. For St. *Paul* himself when he gave apostolical orders for excommunicating the incestuous *corinthian*, would have it done when the whole church

church was gathered together, and as an act of that particular community; as in the texts before cited.

Though the seven epistles in the second and third chapters of the *Revelation* are inscribed to the angels or ministers of those seven churches, and directions are there given about the casting out false worshippers and idolaters, yet it is evident that the contents of these epistles are plainly addressed to the whole body of christians that made up those several societies or churches, and they were to cast out idolaters, &c. from among them, as an act of the churches by their ministers.

Though ministers and elders are sometimes called guides and rulers, &c. yet it is never to be understood in so absolute a sense, as to take all power away from the society or congregation, and leave the ministers to tyrannize as they please over the churches, and, like *Diotrephes*, to admit and exclude whom they will; for which usurpation the apostle *John* severely censures him. 3 *John* verses 9, 10.

Now when such a mode of admission into churches as I have described, by the ministration of the elders, and the consent of the church, has the light of nature and reason leading us into it, and scripture gives frequent countenance to it by various rules and examples, it does not fall very short of a sacred institution.

SECTION V. But it will be objected here, "that it may happen that the ministers may be in the right, and the people in the wrong, in their judgment in particular cases: And must the vote of the people decide such an affair, against the opinion of ministers, elders, or rulers?"

I answer, in the first place,

Answer I. That when any person is proposed to the church, concerning whose admission the minister and people are not agreed, it is much better to persuade that person to seek communion with some other church, rather than occasion strife and debate betwixt the people and the minister. But if that cannot be conveniently, surely it is more adviseable in itself, and more acceptable to God, that any single person should deny himself the benefit of special ordinances, at least for a season, than become a bone of contention, and perhaps a sword of division, in a christian church. A person of a true christian temper would not willingly admit a new member, nor be admitted, to the real offence and grief of any persons, that were there before.

I say, in the next place,

Answer II. That if this method of peace cannot obtain, but admission of the persons still pressed and pursued, it is the duty of the minister to endeavour, by all proper arguments, to convince and persuade the people, and lead them to practise what he esteems the mind of *Christ* in this case, and with much "gentleness to instruct them that oppose themselves." 2 *Tim.* ii. 24. If this will not do, then he should lay the laws of *Christ* before the people, with great and awful solemnity, and acquaint them with the terms of communion which *Christ* has appointed, according to his own best understanding of the gospel: He may charge them, in the name of *Christ*, to receive or exclude such persons only whom *Christ* appoints to be received or excluded; and that as they will answer it at the bar of *Christ*. But if the people persist in their own judgment still, in opposition to the minister, they must be left to answer it to *Christ* their judge; for *Christ* has left no infallible vicegerent here on earth, to govern his churches contrary to their own sense and interpretation of his written word.

It may be proper on such an occasion, that some friendly methods of private conference should be tried, and the reconciling assistance of other prudent ministers and christians



christians desired. But if these attempts prove vain and ineffectual, and the difference still remains, there is no power on earth, that I know, which can authoritatively determine any minister to give the sacred ordinances of *Christ* contrary to his conscience; nor can any power on earth command and constrain a christian church to receive a person to their communion, whom they in their consciences judge unworthy of it; therefore, rather than dwell together in endless contentions, the minister must peacefully resign his office in that church.

And the same rule must be followed in many other cases, wherein a minister and people resolve to disagree, besides in this point of admission to their communion, or exclusion from it. For it is better that the minister should leave himself to the providence of God for further service, than that a church of *Christ* should be rent in pieces by a minister's resolved continuance amongst them, and making parties and wars in so sacred a society. There is nothing perfect in human affairs on earth, where knowledge and grace are so imperfect. We must not expect complete purity and peace, till we arrive at the blessed communion of the church in heaven: Yet I may venture to affirm, that things would scarce ever arise to this extreme height of difference, if christian charity and love, humility and mutual condescension, were but more universally taught and practised, and the furious and narrow spirits of men tempered and enlarged, according to the glorious pattern of the apostles of *Christ*.

SECTION VI. Here will occur another enquiry also; and that is, "when the congregation itself is divided in their sentiments, how must any proposed question be determined? Or whether a proposed communicant must be admitted?"

I answer; in all such cases, the light of nature and the common usage of mankind have determined it, that the greater number should carry the question according to their sentiments, and the lesser ought to submit.

But I would take the liberty to give my opinion in point of prudence thus: That though, in questions of less moment, it is proper enough that the major vote should decide the case, yet, in an affair of considerable importance, such as the choice of a minister, or the receiving a member to constant communion, &c. if it were possible, I would obtain an universal concurrence of all the church; for it would be better, if such a thing could be so managed, as, that no old member of the church be made uneasy by receiving a new one; much less should a church, that will act with prudence, admit a new member contrary to the sentiments of their minister, or give occasion of grief to him, as I have before hinted. But surely, I would never determine the affair only by a majority of one or two voices; for this will be in danger of giving so great an uneasiness to a considerable number of the church, though they happen to be the minor part, that oftentimes it will administer occasion for strife, division and separation.

There is one piece of prudence that we may learn from our greatest enemies, the pope, and the conclave of cardinals; who, in the election of a new pope, never appoint the person but by the vote of two thirds of the college of cardinals; that in an affair of such importance, there may be no dangerous contention of parties after the person is elected. And I should think this so valuable a rule of prudence in the sacred affairs of the church of *Christ*, that no matter of moment should ever be determined, unless two thirds or more of the congregation agree to it. And indeed, if there be a firm opposition made, but by two or three considerable members, against the admission of any new communicant, I would not be hasty to admit the person,

but

but rather persuade him to delay, or to seek communion elsewhere, than endanger the peace of a whole church.

I desire it may be noted here, that I have only delivered my private opinion concerning the distinct power of elders, ministers, and votes of the people, in admission of members to the communion of the church: But whether the power of receiving or excluding be vested entirely in the people, or in the minister, or in both together; whether by a majority of votes, or universal consent of a particular church it equally serves the purpose of my argument in most of the following questions upon this subject.

I put this note only to secure my readers against any prejudice or hasty judgment against the following parts of the book, though they should happen to differ from me in the present question.

### Q U E S T I O N    I I I .

*What are the particular terms of christian communion? Or, what things are necessary to make the profession of christianity credible?*

SECTION I. Having enquired who are the persons that must judge of the credibility of our profession in order to christian communion, we proceed next to inquire, "what things go to make up a credible profession;" and we must take great care in this matter not to make new terms and conditions of our own, which *Christ* the Lord and king of his church has not made; nor to insist upon any thing as necessary to render a profession credible, which may not be fairly deduced from the rules and examples recorded in the new testament, and the application of them to our present age, according to the different circumstances of times, places, and persons.

It must be granted that there are several parts of necessary conduct in christian churches and ordinances, that arise from the very nature and reason of things, from the very being of societies, and from the circumstances of all human affairs; and we must not expect that all these should be dictated by divine revelation, and written down with all their minute particulars in express words of scripture. It would be endless for the sacred writers to have attempted it, and most unreasonable for us to expect it: For the light of nature and reason is given us by God himself for our direction, as well as the light of revelation; and whatsoever rules may be drawn by plain reasoning, and by easy and necessary inference from the comparison of scripture-times with our own, may and ought to be esteemed a part of our direction in these affairs, as well as the express words of scripture; for scripture itself often gives us but very short and imperfect hints of the whole process of civil or ecclesiastical transactions. This shall be more fully made appear, when I come to answer an objection raised from primitive practice.

After a diligent search into the holy scripture, and careful observation of christian churches and their affairs, these three things appear to me to be necessary, at least in our times, to make a profession of christianity sufficiently credible for christian communion.



First, A confession of all the necessary articles of christian religion.  
 Secondly, A professed subjection to all the necessary rules of christian duty.  
 Thirdly, Such a blameless and holy practice in life, as may make the profession of the lips appear, in the common judgment of men, to be the sincere sense of the heart.

Note, under the first head, I say, a confession of all the necessary articles of christian religion, rather than the christian faith, that I may plainly include the practical articles of repentance and new obedience, &c. as well as the doctrinal ones.

Reason and revelation, nature and scripture, seem to make these three things necessary to a credible profession of christianity.

For if a man makes never so fair an appearance of christian duties in his practice, yet if in words he refuse to profess the christian faith, or deny any necessary doctrine or duty of it, he is not worthy of christian communion.

Or if a man give never so good an account of his knowledge and belief of all the articles of the christian religion, and his moral conversation and carriage towards men, has been generally blameless in the eye of the world; yet if he utterly refuse to declare his sincere intention to practise any of the plain and necessary duties of the christian religion, he cannot be accounted worthy of christian communion.

Or if his words make never so full a confession of all the doctrines and duties of christianity, and profess a sincere belief of and submission to them, yet if in his constant practice he be a liar, an adulterer, a drunkard, a known cheat, or a robber, &c. his wicked practice makes his profession incredible, he is not worthy of christian communion.

SECTION II. But I would deliver my thoughts more fully on these three particulars that make up the credibility of a profession, and shew what is implied in each of them.

First, a confession of all the necessary articles of christian religion, includes in it those articles that are necessary to salvation, and those that are necessary to maintain and practise this communion; which two are certainly different from each other.

Though it has been often said in a charitable way, and with very good reason in general discourse, that "there should be nothing required in order to christian communion which is not necessary to salvation," yet this cannot exclude the knowledge of what christian communion is. The very nature of the thing requires that we should know how to practise this communion, before we can actually practise and enjoy it. Now as the Lord's Supper itself is not of absolute necessity to salvation, the things necessary to communicate in the Lord's supper, must imply something more than merely the things necessary to salvation; as I shall also make plainly appear under the seventh question, which will be entirely employed on this first part of christian profession and therefore I proceed to the second.

SECTION III. Secondly, a professed subjection to all the necessary rules of christian duty, includes in it not only those duties that are necessary to salvation, but those duties that are necessary to practise christian communion.

The first sort of christian duties are those that are necessary to salvation, such as the fear, love, and worship of God; faith, love and obedience towards our Lord *Jesus Christ*; repentance of sin, and a humble trust or hope in the promises of the gospel, as shall be shewn at large under the seventh question. Now this profession does

does not signify a mere engagement or promise hereafter to fulfil these duties, but also a profession that we have begun to practise them already; for we are not received into a church in order to receive *Jesus Christ* the Lord, but upon a credible profession that we have received *Jesus Christ* already, *Rom. xv. 7.* "Receive ye one another as *Christ* has received us." We must have therefore some evidence and hope that we have received *Christ* in all his necessary offices, as our Lord and Saviour, and consequently that he has received us, before we should propose ourselves to be received by any visible church.

Now if a man professes repentance, it implies that he has been made sensible of sin, that he has been taught the evil of it, that he mourns for what is past, and is daily watching against it. If a man professes faith in *Christ* as a propitiation and atonement, it implies that he is acquainted with his guilt in the sight of God, that he is in danger of divine wrath, and that he is not able to make atonement for his own sins, and therefore he flies for refuge to *Jesus Christ*, that he may obtain peace with God. If he professes a hope of heaven, it implies in it that he is endeavouring to prepare for this heaven; for every man that hath this hope purifieth himself. *1 John iii. 3.* If he professes to take *Christ* for his example, it implies a desire and attempt to imitate our blessed Lord in self-denial, patience, zeal, &c.

In order to make this profession of our faith and hope credible, it is the custom of some churches to require no more than the person's own general profession that he does believe, and repent, and hope, as in *Acts viii. 37.* "I believe, &c." It is the custom of other churches to desire also some further evidences of the truth of his faith, hope, and repentance, by a more particular account of some of those things which are implied in the exercise of those graces; and this has been usually called, though not properly, the "rendering a reason of the hope that is in him," as *1 Pet. iii. 15.*

The first of these methods hath considerable advantages towards the enlargement of particular churches; and, so far as I can judge, such churches seem to require all that is absolutely necessary to the nature and being of a church of *Christ*.

The second has also some valuable advantages towards the well-being of a church, and the purity and the profit thereof in the inward and experimental parts of christianity, though some persons of extreme bashfulness may have been hereby discouraged and hindered from christian communion.

Both of these methods have some advantages, and some inconveniencies; and it is not my design at present to decide which of the two has the greatest; but this is certain, that every church must judge for itself how large, or how narrow; how general, or how particular a profession of christianity must be, in order to render it credible to themselves; yet let each church take heed that they make not the door of admission larger or straighter than *Christ* has made it.

The second sort of christian duties are those that are necessary to practise christian communion, especially if constant communion be desired, such as, to meet at the same time, and in the same place with some church of *Christ*, to perform christian worship with them there, to agree to the general methods of worship, the customs, order, and discipline that are practised in that church, so far as they can find them agreeable to the will of *Christ* in his word, or so far as they are necessary to maintain the being, order and peace of all religious societies. This is so much, and so plainly implied in the very nature of communion or fellowship, that it is always supposed to be consented to, even where it is not expressly mentioned; this will appear more evident under the next question.



This profession of consent to the worship or order of that church, does not forbid or prevent any person from attempting to reform any mismanagements in the worship or discipline of the church by argument and friendly persuasion; but only it restrains him from all tumultuous and irregular proceedings, in order to such reformation; according to the great canon of the apostle, "let all things be done decently, and in order," 1 Cor. xiv. 40. It is upon this account he forbids the *Corinthians* to speak with unknown tongues without interpretation, to break in upon the public worship, or for several persons to speak all at once, &c. and such natural rules of decency as these, may, in some sense, be called the commands of our Lord, verse 37. to which we owe a professed subjection.

But if a man cannot consent to the most constant and essential forms of ministration, worship and discipline, as practised in that church, it is far better that he should join himself to some other society, whose chief practices and government are more agreeable to his own sentiments.

SECTION IV. The third thing that goes to make up the credibility of our profession, is "such a blameless and holy practice in life, as may make the profession of the lips appear, in the common judgment of men, to be the sincere sense of the heart:" By which we are not to understand a perfection of virtue, or a freedom from every vice; for there is no man living on earth, that doth good, and sinneth not; in many things we offend all; and the best of men have reason to complain, that the evil they would not do, sometimes prevails over them, and they are "led captive to the law of sin," *Jam.* iii. 2. *Rom.* vii. 19, 20.

But it is necessary that persons professing christianity should be free from all gross and scandalous sins, nor be guilty of those crimes in their allowed practice, which in many places of scripture exclude men from the kingdom of heaven; 1 Cor. vi. 9. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. v. 11. "I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat:" And if this text forbids us to keep free and sociable converse with such persons, or to sit down at our tables with those who profess christianity, and practise wickedness, much more does it become a church to exclude them from it's sacred society and fellowship, and to forbid them to sit down at the table of the Lord. Common railers and slanderers, such as the apostle *James* describes, are to be shut out from communion; *Jam.* i. 26. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain;" that is, his religious performances are evidently ineffectual for his own salvation; therefore while he indulges his tongue in a scandalous liberty, his pretences and profession of christianity are vain and incredible, and consequently he has no right to christian communion. The glory of God who is holy, the honour of our Lord *Jesus Christ* who is our pattern of holiness, the credit of the gospel which is a doctrine according to godliness, as well as the common sense of mankind, exclude all such persons from societies of strict and pure religion.

In the very first dawning of the gospel, *John* the baptist, the forerunner of *Christ*, forbid the professing *Pharisees* from baptism, for want of fruits of repentance answerable to their profession, *Matt.* iii. 7, 8. And in following times the *ephebian* converts made

made their faith appear by confessing what they believed, and shewing their deeds. *Acts* xix. 18, 19. And if there be not a frequent account of such instances in scripture, it is because the nature and reason of things render the necessity of it sufficiently evident without many express instances.

The enquiry of a church into the conversation of the person who desires it's communion, may be adjusted and regulated under these four heads, viz. whether he be sober, just, and good, as well as religious. So much of these four characters as lie within the public observation of the world, are necessary in order to become a member of the church.

1. Whether he be sober and temperate in some good measure; free from the vices of drunkenness, uncleanness, violent wrath, railing, revenge, &c. for otherwise it is plain he cannot belong to *Christ*, "they that are *Christ's* have crucified the flesh with it's affections and lusts," *Gal.* v. 24. and the foregoing scriptures I have cited run much upon this point.

2. Whether he be just and honest among his neighbours, a man of fair dealing, faithful to his word, sincere and without hypocrisy in the common affairs of life; for if a person be of a designing, tricking and deceitful temper and carriage among men, how can we trust his profession in the things of God? Or receive it as credible? Besides, the unjust are expressly excluded the kingdom of God, *1 Cor.* vi. 8. "And all liars shall have their part in the burning lake," *Rev.* xxi. 8.

3. Whether he be good, kind, charitable. Whether he hath that love to his neighbour which is the fulfilling of the duties of the second table, *Rom.* xiii. 8, 9. Whatsoever we profess of faith, yet "without love we are nothing," *1 Cor.* xiii. 2. and it may be enquired too what love he has to fellow-christians, for it is an appointed mark of the disciples of *Christ*, *John* xiii. 35. "Hereby shall all men know ye are my disciples if ye love one another. If a man say I love God and hateth his brother he is a liar: He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" *1 John* iv. 20. Without love, and particularly to fellow-christians, he can never be fit for such a holy fellowship, which is to be managed all in love, and whereof love is one of the greatest duties.

4. Whether he be religious and godly. Though inward piety is chiefly to be known to men by the profession of the mouth, and the two foregoing general heads in some measure answer this end, yet there should be some appearances of piety also in our conversation in the world, in order to give us a full right to christian communion. In such an enquiry as this, at least it must be found that such a person is not a scoffer at religion, that he does not make a jest of things sacred, that he uses the name of God with reverence in common conversation, that he speaks honourably of *Christ*, and his gospel, and his ordinances upon just occasion, and that he frequents some places of religious worship; for we are to look diligently that there be no profane person in our churches, as well as no fornicator, *Heb.* xii. 15.

Thus I have given a particular account of those three things that join to make up the credibility of our profession, in order to be regularly admitted to the communion of a christian church.

SECTION V. Objection. But why must there be so many things required to make a profession of christianity credible in our day, beyond what was required in the primitive times? Then they only confessed *Christ* to be the *Messiah*, the Son of God, or that he was raised from the dead in order to baptism and admission into the church. So it was when many thousands were added to the church in one day; so the eunuch



when *Philip* baptized him, *Acts* viii. 37. So the jailor and *Lydia*, *Acts* xvi. 15, 35. and many others; or at most, their present works were thought sufficient to confirm their confessions, *Acts* xix. 18. "Many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds," without long enquiries into the whole of their faith, or the course of their conversation.

Answer I. The account that the scripture give these transactions is very short, yet sufficient to inform us that there was more discourse on both sides, in order to the baptizing their converts, than is expressly written down; for even the confessions that *Lydia* and the jailor made are not written, but it is said in general, they believed; therefore we are not to take it for granted there was nothing else required, because the scripture in those places mentions no more than a word or two of short confession.

Answer II. In several places where such transactions are recorded in scripture, there is no mention of their works or conversation at all; and surely no minister or church in our day would imagine, that a mere confession, "that *Jesus* is the *Christ*," without any further enquiry either after knowledge, faith, or works, is sufficient ground for admission to sacred ordinances; for then we must take in almost whole nations. Besides, if a man did make such a profession, "that *Christ* was the Son of God," and his conversation were blameless to outward appearance; yet who of our ministers, or which of our churches would receive him without some further enquiry into his knowledge of God, and *Christ*, and the gospel? Therefore it is sufficiently plain, by the acknowledgment and practice of those who make this objection, that they themselves do not think it necessary to confine their enquiries only to such a single sentence of profession as the scripture-history expresses, and seek no further.

Answer III. It is sufficiently evident to me, that the fundamental or necessary articles of religion are not the same in all ages and places; but more or less knowledge is necessary, in order to salvation, according to the degrees of divine revelation in several nations or ages. The belief of the crucifixion and resurrection of *Christ* was not fundamental in *Christ*'s own life-time; for when he spake of his own death, *Peter* replied, "far be it from thee, Lord, *Matth.* xvi. 22. This shall not be unto thee:" And the rest of the apostles knew not certainly that *Christ* should rise from the dead, for some doubted even after his resurrection, *Matth.* xxviii. 17. Yet they were the chief of the church of *Christ* upon earth at that time. So in the very first promulgation of the gospel, before *Judaism* was quite destroyed, the apostles themselves had not so full a knowledge of christianity as they afterwards, by degrees, received from the instructions of the blessed Spirit. Many passages of scripture discover this, as *Acts* x. 14—17. and xv. 7—30. and *Gal.* ii. 2—14. At this time there was scarce any thing of the new testament written; and though the evidences of the christian religion were great, yet the opportunities of a large and extensive knowledge were exceeding few and small among the common converts; if compared with our age: Therefore the messiahship of *Christ*, his death, and resurrection, and exaltation, with a very few alterations from natural or *jewish* religion, seem to be the chief things then necessary to believe in order to salvation, or to profess in order to communion.

But when in process of time the *jewish* oeconomy was divinely destroyed, christianity grown to it's full perfection, the canon of scripture completed, and several christian truths and duties more plainly and expressly revealed, it may be well supposed that where this canon of scripture is freely published, God may require something more of christian knowledge in order to salvation, than in the very first years of the gospel. I speak this last proposition but modestly, and as a probable opi-

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nion; but if this be true, then it clearly follows that there are more things necessary to make a profession of christianity credible at this day in most places of *England*, than were necessary even in *Judea* in the first years of christianity.

Answer IV. If the essentials of any doctrine were perfectly the same in all ages, yet the credibility of it's profession is exceeding different, according to different circumstances of time, place and persons. Where hardships and sufferings attend the professors of any religion, a very slight profession of it will persuade me that a man understands it, and is very sincere in it; because he exposes himself to suffering by this means: But where there is full liberty given, or especially if external advantages attend it, there every one will be ready to profess, though he has little knowledge or sincerity.

Those first times of the gospel, were times of reproach and persecution; the sect of christians was every where spoken against, and death and dangers attended it on all sides. Now to confess the name of *Christ* amidst the reproaches of the world, against the opposition of the wise and the foolish, the *jews* and the *grecs*, the threatening of kings, and the violence of the people, was a more powerful and evident proof of the truth of their faith, than if they had made long speeches, and had the testimony of a continued blameless conversation in a land and age of christians. Surely that confession, which was sufficient for martyrdom, if their enemies knew it; must be sufficient for communion, when made known to the church. But in our age and nation where christianity is the profession of the time, and the country, a mere acknowledgment of the name, or death and resurrection of *Christ*, is not sufficient to prove us knowing or sincere christians; and there ought to be so much larger a confession, and so many credible circumstances attending it, before we can reasonably, or upon just grounds, believe a man to be a true christian. All these requirements which I have before mentioned being put together, do not amount to so credible a profession, as for a man to say boldly this one sentence, "I am a christian," in the face of death and martyrdom.

Answer V. I might add also in the last place, that a great number of the conversions of the primitive christians, were so sudden and surprising by the extraordinary effusion of the holy Spirit, that the very miracle of their conversion did sufficiently answer the end of a large and particular confession. The work of God on the souls of men was sometimes in an instant, and they were made believers, out of unbelievers, at once; the Spirit fell on them while they heard the word; and when they who just before professed judaism or heathenism, and neither knew nor loved *Jesus Christ*, confessed his name and his religion at once; the wonderful change was evident to all, and they had no long accounts to give either of their faith or conversion, their knowledge or conversation; nor was it required, because the miracle itself made their profession sufficiently credible. Besides, spiritual gifts were conferred on multitudes in that day as soon as they were converted, and gave sufficient evidence for acceptance unto baptism, as *Acts* x: 44, 46, 47. "While *Peter* yet spake these words, the holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then answered *Peter*, can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the holy Ghost, as well as we?"

He that well considers all these things, and sets the affairs of the primitive times in a due light, and thus compares them with our own, will see plainly that something more is necessary to make a profession of christianity credible in our day, than was needful in the first age of the church. And yet still we may be said to follow the

rules



rules and examples of scripture, while we require nothing more in order to communion than what is necessary to make our profession credible; for so much of this has been always required even in scripture-times, and the word of God, and the very nature of things seem to demand it.

## Q U E S T I O N    I V .

*What is a church covenant? And whether it be necessary to christian communion?*

**B**ESIDES the things that have been already mentioned, as included in a credible profession of christianity, it is worth our enquiry, whether any solemn covenant be needful in order to communion. Now to answer this question we must distinguish between that communion which is fixed and constant in one church, or that which is only occasional.

By fixed, constant, and complete communion, I mean the joining myself to a particular church, so as to become a complete member of that religious society, engaging to perform at appointed times and places, my most usual public worship with that society rather than with others, to assist in all services necessary to support that society, and partake of all privileges of it for mutual edification and comfort, and to maintain the public honour of *Christ* in the world.

By occasional communion, I understand a mere participation of the general and special ordinances of the gospel with a particular church for a time, under the general character and claim of christianity, and so far as occasions of providence may make it convenient and desirable. But not to become properly a member of that particular society, nor be interested in the affairs, regulation or management of it.

Now for this occasional communion, there is no necessity that every such communicant should enter solemnly into a covenant or agreement with that particular church, any farther than only to partake of those special ordinances for a season in a decent and regular way. It is sufficient for this sort of communion, that a person make such a credible profession of christianity as has been before described, or that he be recommended by some other church, or the elders thereof, before whom he has made such a credible profession; or that it be some way ascertained to the church whose communion he desires, that he has done it.

But where fixed and complete fellowship with a particular society is desired, the very nature of things seems to require it, that there should be such a mutual agreement among the persons that intend to practise this constant communion. This is part of the second thing requisite to make our profession credible, viz. a professed subjection to all the necessary duties of christianity, as will plainly appear by what follows.

A church is composed of such persons as agree to worship and walk together in all the ordinances of *Christ*, viz. to attend on the ministry or preaching of the word, on praying to God together, on speaking or singing the praises of God, and celebrating all the institutions of *Christ*, especially that great one, the supper of the Lord, which is called communion.

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They devote themselves first to the Lord in public by their profession, as they have done before in secret; covenanting to walk with him in all his ordinances; then they give up themselves to one another, and they receive one another in the Lord, which is the word used most frequently in the new testament for admission into the communion of saints, or being solemnly acknowledged as fellow-christians, and consequently as having a right to special ordinances. They profess their agreement or consent to worship usually together, to attend usually on the ordinances of communion as administered in that church, and to fulfil all necessary duties of christian fellowship in a special manner towards one another for mutual edification, as far as God shall instruct and enable them: And this is called the church-covenant, which is in truth nothing else but a voluntary solemn agreement with some particular society, to practise those social duties of the christian religion among them at appointed times and places, which *Christ* himself has required in general to be practised somewhere when opportunity is found.

Such a consent or agreement to meet at stated times and places for social worship, is not indeed formally instituted in the new testament: But there are several passages in the new testament which very plainly suppose it, as will appear immediately. And the reason why it was not delivered in the form of a gospel institution is this, because it is a principle of natural religion; the light of reason teaches it, and upon this account it was not set down as an institution under the old testament, though doubtless the patriarchs and holy men of old practised it, ever since there was any such thing as public worship set up in the world: So the *Israelites* met and read the scripture, and prayed in their synagogues without the formality of a particular divine institution; wherever a synagogue was built, the neighbouring inhabitants by consent weekly worshipped there.

I confess where magistrates take upon them to impose a religion upon the people, and national and parochial churches are appointed by some assuming powers, this free covenant or agreement degenerates into a constrained consent; but such a free and explicate agreement is more necessary among those christians who are left to their own liberty, or who dissent from a national and established church.

This covenant has indeed been much censured both by the profane world, and by some fellow-christians: And it must be confessed that some few ministers and churches of rigid and narrow principles, have heretofore given too just an occasion for censure, by drawing up their particular church-covenants in a long form of writing, and inserting several things into them that were by no means necessary to common christianity, and such as favoured too much of a party-spirit; but churches and ministers in our age better understand christian liberty and true principles of charity. I know of none of these impositions in our day; and if our present practice in this matter be censured by any, I am persuaded it is merely for want of understanding it: For if it be fairly represented, as I have described it, it appears to be a piece of mere natural religion, and social worship; and is so far from being an addition to the rules of the gospel, or an imposition on the consciences of christians, that no voluntary religious society can possibly subsist without some such covenant. When any person therefore joins himself to, and becomes a member of a christian church, this covenant or mutual agreement is always implied where it is not expressed; and those that have been so weak as to ridicule the forms of it, yet are so wise as to practise the substance of it.

Indeed



Indeed the mere necessity and reason of the thing is so plain and convincing, that one would wonder that any man should speak against it, if he will but give himself leave to consider the following particulars.

1. How can there be a receiving of each other in the Lord, at the first forming of a church, if there be not a mutual agreement, or giving up of themselves to each other to worship the Lord together? Christians are commanded to do it, "that with one mind and one mouth they may glorify God." *Rom. xv. 6, 7.* And how can any particular member afterward be received to communion, if there be not such a society or church to receive him, and to which he may give up himself to walk with them in the Lord?

2. How can there be any social worship performed, if there be no agreement to worship together in the same place, and at the same time? If all the christians must always be at perfect liberty to worship where they will, and communicate every Lord's day at a different place, a minister may sometimes be left to preach to the seats and walls, if none are bound to attend on his ministrations: And on the other hand, surely the minister may take as much liberty as the people; and he may absent himself and worship elsewhere, when they are all gathered together and wait for a sermon. Thus many assemblies for worship may be without a teacher, and many teachers without an assembly, and some small assemblies have many teachers.

3. How can there be any provision made of a proper place of worship for a whole assembly, or any conveniencies or decencies that are requisite for sacred actions, without such an agreement? How can a table be appointed or furnished with bread and wine, and vessels to contain them, fit to distribute the Lord's supper, unless several persons have agreed upon it?

4. How can the minister be maintained if there be no societies agreeing to attend on their ministry, and support and encourage it? Yet this is a duty incumbent on all those who are ministered unto: *Gal. vi. 6.* *1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.* Each society is bound by the rules of the gospel to maintain and honour their own ministers "who labour among them in word and doctrine." *1 Tim. v. 17.* and *1 Thess. v. 12, 13.*

5. How can the poor of *Christ* be fed and clothed, if christians are not distributed into distinct societies, and each take care of their own poor? *Eph. iv. 28.* To whom should the poor christians have applied of old, if not to their own societies? For single persons cannot, nor are they bound wholly to maintain them. They must therefore be distributed into distinct societies, that every poor christian may know where to apply for relief; and that each of the richer may know also to whom they should give their constant alms, and look upon themselves in a special manner bound to supply. If all the poor saints in a nation were straggling abroad, and belonged to no christian society, how should the richer persons, or richer societies know these are God's poor, and of the household of faith, whom they are bound in a special manner to take care of, *Gal. vi. 10.* unless they have made a profession to some church of *Christ*, and are known by this means?

So great is the necessity of these things to be done by particular societies, that christian princes and governors, in order to have these things regularly performed, have thrown all their dominions into the form of distinct parishes, or single congregations; though they have had not much regard to any rules of the new testament, in establishing their church worship and discipline in other parts of it.

6. How can the ordinances of censure and excommunication be ever administered, if there be no societies agreeing to walk and worship together? If any person be charged with a fault or hainous crime, he will reply, "he belongs not to any society,  
who

who shall assume a right to deal with him and censure him?" And it is impossible that the whole visible church of *Christ* can meet together, or take cognizance of such particular causes, and give censures, unless we set up a pope, or council, or conclave of cardinals to do all this, and constrain all particular churches to submit to their sovereign and universal dictates.

There must be therefore an agreement betwixt a company of professing christians, giving up themselves to one another, and receiving each other in the Lord, in order to maintain the church of *Christ* in the world, his gospel, or his honour; to support his poor, or his ministers, or the purity of his church, or of any holy ordinance. Receive therefore the apostle's exhortation. *Rom. xv. 6, 7.* "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father our Lord *Jesus Christ*.—receive ye one another as *Christ* also received us, to the glory of God."

## Q U E S T I O N V.

*When a person is once joined to a particular church, whether he may never worship with other churches occasionally, or change his fixed communion to another church?*

**I**n answer, That this agreement of worshipping together is not so strictly to be understood, as if none of those persons should ever worship any where else; for there are various occasions in the course of life, that may lead the members of one church now and then to worship with another. Since we all hold the same faith and worship in the essentials of it, we are to esteem ourselves in general communion with the whole visible church of *Christ*; and sometimes we join in worship with others, merely to testify our charity and christian fellowship with those that in the circumstantial of religion differ from us; sometimes to accompany a particular friend; to hear a particular minister; to attend on some special occasion of prayer, or preaching; on such occasions we may very reasonably worship with various assemblies: Or perhaps we may be called to travel from home, and to spend many seasons of worship absent from our own particular community, and then we join with those churches where providence may cast us.

When christians travel where they are unknown, or make any considerable stay in distant places, they should carry with them a letter of recommendation from the officers or members of their own church, to any churches of *Christ*, where they may come; such are the letters that *St. Paul* speaks of. *2 Cor. iii. 1.* "Do we need letters of commendation to you, or from you?" And thus he himself recommends christians to distant churches, as *Rom. xvi. 1, 2.* "I commend unto you, *Phoebe*, our sister, who is a servant at the church at *Cenchrea*, that ye receive her in the Lord as becometh saints," that is, that ye receive her to the participation of christian ordinances, as well as assist her in any civil affairs.

This agreement or church-covenant, therefore, only obliges persons, as far as they can with tolerable conveniency of affairs and spiritual edification, to make that church, of which they are members, the usual place of their worship, and especially their participation of the Lord's supper, whereby special communion is maintained.



The question concerning the changing of our fixed communion from one church to another, may be thus determined.

All church-fellowship is appointed for the public honour of God, for our mutual assistance and edification in spiritual things, and for the support of the interest and kingdom of *Christ* among men. Whensoever therefore any member cannot attain these ends in the particular church he belongs to, after solemn consideration and prayer to God for counsel, he may desire a dismissal to some other church, and upon these reasons the church ought to give it. A brother, or a sister, is not in bondage in such cases; and the pastoral office, and all "church power is for edification, and not for destruction," as *St. Paul* speaks, 2 *Cor.* xiii. 10.

Now this necessity of changing our communion may happen several ways: As when a person removes his habitation to such a distance, as that he cannot conveniently attend and perform the duties of church-fellowship in that society; or when the church falls into pernicious errors and heresies; or when upon any other account his own edification in that church is not to be attained; or when other necessary circumstances of life, or religion, make his union to another church of much more importance. But in these cases let the conscience of a man be well informed, and let him duly consider all circumstances before he put this in practice: For it argues a light and changeable temper to be running always from one church to another, and unbecoming the spirit of the gospel. Yet where the reasons of removing this communion from one church to another are just and good, and after due application to the church, if they refuse to dismiss him, he may fairly depart without it, and join himself to any other church that is satisfied in his credible profession of christianity.

## Q U E S T I O N VI.

*Whether fixed communion with some particular church be a necessary duty: And whether any may be admitted to occasional communion, who are no fixed members of any church.*

**I**T is a natural enquiry flowing from the former question, whether any person is at liberty to content himself merely with occasional communion, sometimes with one church and sometimes with another, without becoming a fixed member of any church at all? Or whether a church may forbid a person occasional communion, who refuses utterly to join in any fixed communion?

The duties of holy fellowship for the glory of God and mutual edification, which are most regularly practised in a state of fixed communion, are so many, and so plain in scripture, and in the reason of things, that very few persons can be exempted from them: For those duties are such as these, to attend on public ministrations together, to pray and confer together about spiritual things, with a sort of holy intimacy or friendship, to encourage and support the ministry, to maintain the poor, to uphold the public worship of God by assisting in the provision of a place, and all other external things necessary for public worship, to receive members into the church, to

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censure and reprove, and cast out scandalous members, to watch over one another in their holy conversation, &c. to admonish and to receive admonitions.

I grant that so many of these duties as can be conveniently performed toward all fellow-christians, should never be omitted where providence gives just occasion; but since each christian cannot watch over all others, worship with all others, assist toward the maintenance of all the poor, nor all the ministers, &c. those with whom he agrees to worship in a stated way, are the persons to whom he is most immediately called to fulfil these kind offices, and has fairer opportunities to do it. And as I have shewn before, that public worship could never be certainly, regularly and comfortably maintained without such a fixed communion, and every person that refuses such services to *Christ* and the church, must have very plain and constraining reasons to excuse his neglect.

Besides the privileges of fixed fellowship are, or should be, alluring and encouraging; such as, their opportunities of serving *Christ* in his public interest in the world, supporting his name among men, their vote in chusing ministers or officers of the church, and their interest in the prayers, cares and watchfulness of the church, for them, and over them, their special right to the spiritual assistance of the ministers and elders of that church in private counsels, admonitions, and prayers with them and for them; their own temporal support, assistance and relief by the church, if they fall into poverty, &c.

It is my opinion that scarce any person can be justly exempted, or excused, from fixed communion somewhere, but those, who by reason of their different opinions, unhappy temper, or some special circumstances of life, are under some sort of incapacity of fulfilling several of those duties, and yet by their credible profession appear worthy to partake of the special ordinances of the church.

And if there be any person to be found in such circumstances, I should think it is only such as these. 1. One that has no fixed abode, but his business of life is at all uncertainties, and calls him perpetually to change his residence: Such were the apostles and evangelists, and the itinerant preachers of the first century, together with their attendants, who seem to be settled members of no particular church. Or 2. Such a one that differs exceedingly in his sentiments in some important doctrines, or practical points of religion, from all the churches of *Christ* near him, and yet may be supposed to hold all the necessary articles of the christian faith, but may not be so fit to assist as a member in the affairs of a church of so different opinions. Or lastly, there may be such a person as may give some credible evidences of true piety in his heart, but his natural temper is so violent, his spirit so various and inconstant, that he can scarce confine himself to the settled orders of any community, but will be more likely to divide a congregation, than to edify it in love.

Perhaps it may be lawful and proper; nay, I add further, perhaps it is a necessary duty at some seasons, and upon very good evidence of their christianity, to receive such sort of persons as these to occasional communion, though they have no fixed relation to any particular church; and the general rules of christianity will oblige them to perform several relative duties towards their fellow-christians, and to help support the external charges of those churches, with whom for a season they hold fellowship.

But after all, I must confess that the special duties, which belong to a fixed settled communion of christians, are so generally plain in scripture, and so necessary from the very nature of religious societies, as described under the fourth question, that in my opinion, any church of *Christ* has reason to make very careful enquiry into the



real christianity of a person who desires occasional communion only, but utterly refuses all manner of fixed communion with any church where he has proper opportunity; unless his habitation be always unsettled, or his circumstances very peculiar, or he can give some other just reason of his refusal to the church.

I should also add in this place, that if persons should be freely and readily indulged and tolerated in this sort of loose communion, because they may have some sort of appearance of reason for it, others that have much less reason, or none at all, might probably demand and expect it; and these examples would tend greatly to the dissolution and confusion of churches: In such a case, though it may be barely lawful, yet it seems not to be expedient, and therefore should not be commonly practised, since it leads to the ruin of churches, "rather than to their edification." 1 Cor. x. 23. except in cases extraordinary.

Another very obvious question arises here, viz. Whether a church, or religious society, may refuse a person who offers himself to become a fixed member of that church in constant and complete communion, and makes a visible and credible profession of his faith? Whether a church can lawfully forbid such a person to become a complete member, and restrain him only to a sort of occasional or incomplete communion?

Answer. Though it is certain that without such fixed societies or churches, public christianity could not be well maintained, and therefore far the greatest part of christians are certainly obliged to become members of some particular christian society; yet as there may be some peculiar cases which may excuse a person from fixed communion and membership, so there may be peculiar cases also which may excuse a church from receiving some persons to complete membership with them, though they may admit them to occasional communion.

Let it be considered, that by admitting a person to fixed communion, and making him a member of that particular society, he not only requires a right to join with the society in all the ordinances of the gospel and special communion, in public on the Lord's days, but he hath a right to be with them at any more private meetings of the whole church, and to consult and act in their special affairs: He has a right to attend on such meetings for considering of the circumstances and state of the church, for regulating things that are amiss, for altering any of their customs, for distributing monies to the poor, for chusing a pastor or other officers, for admitting members, and for exercising the discipline of the church, &c. He acquires also a right in joint-partnership to the temporal possessions of the society, suppose it be a meeting-house for public worship, vessels of plate for church communion, or any houses, or temporal goods or donatives, which may belong to that particular society.

Now though the laws of *Christ* require us to receive every visible christian, who desires it, to communion in public worship, and in special ordinances of the gospel, because he is fit for it, yet those laws do not require that every such person should be admitted to the peculiar counsels and affairs of any particular society, because perhaps he is really unfit for it. Perhaps they know, or have abundant reason to believe, that his different opinions, or his unhappy temper, or his peculiar circumstances, would render him a very troublesome member of it, that he would raise parties in the choice of officers, or in admission of members, or in distributing to the poor, or in the regulation of other church affairs; and therefore they allow him only occasional communion with them, which is all that seems to be his duty with regard to that particular church, and which is all the duty which the laws of reason, or of religion, seem to demand of them toward him.

Besides,

Besides, let it be further considered, that whatsoever instances of christian fellowship in sacred things the laws of *Christ* may demand for such a person, yet it is certain the laws of *Christ* do not demand for him any share in the temporal possessions of that religious society, nor in the distribution of their temporal things, unless it be perhaps to relieve him in some degree, if he be necessitous. Therefore the laws of *Christ* do not require that society to receive such a person to complete communion and membership, to introduce him into their councils and affairs, or to vest him in any of their temporal possessions, since it is evident he will become a very troublesome member, and endanger, if not destroy, the edification and peace of the particular society or church. "Let all things be done to edification:" 1 Cor. xiv. 26. "Follow those things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another." Rom. xiv. 19.

## Q U E S T I O N VII.

*What knowledge is necessary for christian communion?*

SECTION I. **U**NDER the third question I have shewn that the knowledge necessary to communion, includes in it both a knowledge of what is necessary to salvation, and a knowledge of what is further necessary to maintain and enjoy this holy communion: The very nature of things requires this.

First, Let us consider the things necessary to salvation. How many articles of the christian faith or practice, are necessary to our salvation; or in other words, how many fundamentals are there, is not expressly determined in any part of the scripture. It is a question that has troubled the christian churches almost two hundred years, ever since the reformation began, but has never yet been decided to the common satisfaction even of those that held the scripture to be the only and perfect rule of faith and practice. Therefore as every man must judge for himself, concerning the fundamentals of christianity, in order to examine his own heart, and evidence to himself his hopes of salvation; so every particular church must judge for itself, which are the fundamentals, or necessary articles of christianity, to examine those that propose themselves to communion, and evidence their right to it.

I grant this, that in determining the nature or number of necessary articles, the churches of *Christ* ought to govern their sentiments by the rules of scripture, as near as they can find them by comparing one place with another, and form their judgment in this matter by a large and extensive charity. A general love to mankind, the dutiful imitation of God our saviour, and the exemplary practice of the blessed apostles, oblige us to make as few articles necessary as is consistent with the great ends of the christian religion, and to impose nothing more upon the consciences of men in this respect, than we solemnly believe our Lord *Jesus Christ* himself imposes in his word, as we will answer it at the great day of his appearance. Yet it is certain, and without controversy, that there are several articles both of doctrine and duty, of such importance, that a man cannot be a true christian without them, nor have any just hope of christian salvation according to the gospel; and consequently, without the acknowledgement of the articles, a person may lawfully be refused communion.

Here



Here let me lay down this preliminary: That the fundamentals of religion, as I have proved before, are very different, in different ages and nations, according to the different degrees of revelation, and different advantages for knowing the truth: But ever since the time that the canon of scripture was finished, and where this canon is published and acknowledged, we may say in general, and with regard to church-communion, that the fundamentals of christianity are the same to this day; especially in such places of *Great-Britain, Ireland, &c.* where persons enjoy so great degrees of advantage for obtaining christian knowledge. What gracious allowances for want of capacity, or for want of means, in dark corners of *England*, or in *India*, God will make hereafter, is not my business to enquire into; but certainly, we are to admit none to christian communion who have not the knowledge that is essential to christianity. And though we cannot precisely reckon up the certain number of essential or fundamental articles, yet we may lay down such characters of them, as may assist and regulate the affairs of christian communion.

SECTION. II. We may begin therefore with negatives, and may boldly say, those cannot be fundamentals either of faith or practice, which are not very clearly revealed, either in express words, or in very plain, easy, and obvious consequences; they must be such as the meanest christian may be able to find by reading his bible, with sincere desire of truth, with holy diligence, and with humble prayer: For the "way of holiness and salvation is so plain, that fools shall not err therein." *Isai.* xxxv. 8. which may be explained by that text. *1. Cor.* i. 26, 27. "Not many wise are called, but the foolish things of this world," &c.

Those again cannot be fundamental which are only to be found in such verses of scripture, the authority whereof may have been any ways dubious or reasonably suspected. For fundamentals must have the strongest authority, as well as the plainest evidence, and that for the same reason. Upon this account, I would never call that a fundamental, which is not mentioned but in one single text of scripture; for it is possible, that such a single text might be contested by critics, or transcribed false, by the neglect or iniquity of men, or be falsely translated, either by ignorance or design. Fundamentals must be revealed in several parts of the bible, and appear to be the frequent design and subject of the holy writers; that so the faith and salvation of plain christians might be secured against the danger of fatal mistakes, and the subtilty of critics, or cunning deceivers.

Such articles also can never be fundamental, as have no necessary influence on the honour of God, the good of our neighbour, or our own holiness and final salvation: For since the honour of God, and the good of men, is the very end of the gospel, that can never be an essential part of it, without which, these ends may be happily and gloriously attained.

SECTION III. The plain and positive characters of true fundamental articles in christian religion, seem to be such as these.

1. Those without which there can be no religion: Such as, that there is a God; that this God is to be worshipped, believed, and obeyed; that he governs man in this life in order to a final judgment; that there is a future state; and rewards and punishments hereafter, according to our different behaviours here.

2. Those also seem to be essential, necessary, and fundamental articles of the christian religion, which are the chief points that raise it above natural, or distinguish it from the *jewish* religion, and which are represented in scripture as the very foundation

dation and substance, the mystery and glory, of the gospel; such are these:

"That all mankind are sinners; are destitute of holiness and happiness; and sinful man cannot recover himself to the favour and image of God; and there is no way of access to God for him but by a mediator." *John* xiv. 6. "No man cometh to the Father but by me:" And I take this doctrine of the necessity and use of a mediator, to be the groundwork of the difference betwixt natural and revealed religion.

"That this mediator is the Son of God dwelling in flesh; or, that the Son of God has taken upon him human nature for this very end, to become a mediator:" This seems to be properly the great mystery of the gospel, and it should be acknowledged without controversy, that "God was manifest in the flesh." *1 Tim.* iii. 16.

"That *Jesus* of *Nazareth* is this glorious person, this only mediator. There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man *Jesus Christ*." *1 Tim.* ii. 5. "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." *John* viii. 24.

"That, in order to the salvation of man, *Christ* is appointed by the Father to instruct us, as a teacher or prophet; to make an atonement for our sins, and to intercede for us as a priest; and to give us laws, and rule and judge us as our Lord and king:" For he has given us most frequent, plain, and express notices in his word, that this is the way whereby he saves us; and if we know not so much as this of the method of his salvation, how can we apply to him for it, or receive it at his hands with any degree of faith?

"That the Lord *Jesus Christ* is to be believed, trusted in, received, and submitted to, under these several characters which he sustains, by all that would partake of this salvation:" For if he be absolutely rejected in either of these his offices, we have no reason to expect him to fulfil any part of his salvation to us, or in us. "If we refuse him that speaketh from heaven as our prophet, we cannot escape." *Heb.* xii. 25. If we utterly reject his proper sacrifice as a priest, there "remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation." *Heb.* 26, 27. And if we refuse this man as a "king to reign over us, we shall be slain before his face." *Luke* xix. 27. He will "take vengeance on them that obey not his gospel." *2 Thess.* i. 8.

"That God forgives repenting sinners, and is reconciled to them, not for the merit of their repentances, but for the sake of what *Jesus Christ* had done and suffered." This is a very evident consequent from the former doctrines, and has a plain and necessary connexion with them. It seems to be the very substance of the gospel, that we are "justified or saved, not by our own works, but by the grace of God abounding to sinners, through the redemption which our Lord *Jesus Christ* hath obtained; and that *Jesus Christ* redeemed us from the curse, by bearing that curse for us; and that God is at peace with us for his sake; that the gospel is the word of reconciliation; that God was in *Christ*, reconciling sinners to himself; because he that knew no sin was made sin, or a sin-offering, for us, that we, who are sinners, might be made righteous, and accepted of God through him." *2 Cor.* v. 18—21. See *Rom.* iii. 20—25. *Ephes.* ii. 8, 9. and many other places.

"That though we cannot obtain the favour of God and eternal life by the merit of our own good works, yet faith in *Christ*, repentance of all sin, and holiness of heart and life, are necessary, in order to our enjoyment of the final salvation." The scripture is most express and positive in such sort of articles. "He that believeth not shall be damned." *Mark* xvi. 16. "Except ye repent ye shall perish." *Luke* xiii. 3, 5. And,

"without



"without holiness no man shall see the Lord." *Heb. xii. 14.* Now by this article we are bound to resist all temptations, to strive against and subdue all sinful appetites and inclinations, and to practise all known duties of fear, faith, love, and worship, towards God; and justice, faithfulness, and kindness, toward men.

"That the holy Spirit of God is appointed and given to bless men with wisdom and spiritual understanding, to assist them to accept of this salvation of *Christ*, to sanctify them here, and fit them for the full enjoyment of it hereafter: For since the canon of scripture is completed, there is a number of such express attestations therein, to the enlightening and sanctifying operations of the holy Spirit, that he who utterly and in all senses denies them, seems to deny that there is any thing for the blessed Spirit to do amongst men, since the day of miracles was ended. Now since the gift of the Spirit is one of the most glorious and promised blessings of the gospel, a considerable part of the gospel seems to me to consist in the operations of the holy Spirit; and in this sense, he that denies the holy Spirit, seems to refuse a glorious part of the appointed salvation.

Let it be considered also, that we are baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and holy Spirit: And is it not necessary that we should have some general knowledge and idea who this Father, Son, and Spirit are, and what is their distinct concern and business in matters of our salvation, together with their divine all-sufficiency to perform it?

The *Ephesians*, who had never heard of a holy Ghost, and were baptized only in the baptism of *John*, might be true believers without this knowledge. *Acts xix. 2, 3.* But since we have had such abundant discoveries of him, and are baptized into his name, the case is much altered. How can we accept adult baptism, or confirm that which we passed through in infancy, at our coming into a church, if we know nothing of the holy Spirit, nor the use of him in our religion?

It might also be added, as a further argument on this head, that the communion of the holy Ghost is the great gospel-benediction, joined with the "love of God, and the grace of our Lord *Jesus Christ*;" as in *2 Cor. xiii. 14.* So that our initiation into christianity being solemnized in the name of Father, Son, and holy Spirit, our christian life and state being maintained by their distinct offices or transactions therein, and our hope of happiness depending on their divine benediction, we may reasonably infer, that some knowledge and faith of the blessed trinity are necessary to christian salvation.

"That there shall be a resurrection of the body is another such article; for if the dead rise not, then is not *Christ* risen; and if *Christ* be not risen, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." *1 Cor. xv. 16, 17.* However this might be doubted by some *Corinthians* before this epistle was written, yet it cannot safely be doubted now.

"That there is a state of happiness hereafter prepared for saints where *Jesus Christ* is," *John xiv. 3.* and those that "refuse his gospel shall be punished from the presence of the Lord with everlasting destruction." *2 Thess. i. 9.* These seem to be necessary motives to work upon our hope and fear, and without which the gospel could hardly be supposed to be received amongst men; and therefore I count them necessary and fundamental articles of christianity.

Thus I have attempted to give some instances of such doctrines as seem to be necessary to a christian profession, according to the second character of fundamentals; viz. "such as raise it above natural religion, and distinguish it from *Judaism*, &c. and are

are represented in scripture as the foundation, the substance, and the glory of the gospel."

3. A third character by which several fundamentals may be known, is this: "Those doctrines or duties that are expressly made necessary to salvation in the word of God, are certainly fundamentals:" Though the greatest part of these are such as are either necessary to all religion under the first head, or are some of the most distinguishing doctrines of the christian religion under the second head; as, "he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." *Heb. xi. 6.* That *Jesus Christ* is the only way to the Father. *John xiv. 6.* "No man cometh to the Father but by me. That *Jesus* is the *Christ*: Who is a liar, but he that denieth that *Jesus* is the *Christ*? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son: Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." *1 John ii. 22, 23.*

The duties of believing in *Christ*, mortification of sins of the flesh, and perseverance in faith and holiness, I esteem fundamental and necessary duties; because the scripture expressly saith, "he that believeth not, shall be damned." *Mark xvi. 16.* "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die." *Rom. viii. 13.* "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." *Heb. x. 38.* And for the same reason this error, that justification is to be attained by the works of the law, seems to be an heresy, or fundamental error; because the scripture saith, "*Christ* is become of none effect to you, whosoever of you will be justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace." *Gal. v. 4.* By which we are to understand such a hope of justification by the law, as made the sacrifice and atonement of *Christ* needless; and which was most probably the sense of the heretics in that day.

SECTION IV. But here I desire my readers to take notice of these five things.

Note first, That I have by no means pretended to reckon up all the fundamental articles, or give a full or regular catalogue of them: There may be some which I have omitted, and some which I have mentioned twice, and that are included in each other. I have only laid down some general tokens or marks, whereby necessary truths and duties may be known, so far as the terms of christian communion are concerned therein.

Note second, I have here joined several doctrinal and practical articles together, supposing that all those duties which the scripture makes necessary to be practised, are necessary also to be known in order to practise.

Note third, I call these articles fundamental; and it is my opinion they may be insisted on as necessary to communion, because they seem to me necessary to true christianity, in such an age and land of light as our's is. Yet, what I hinted before I repeat now, that, as I will not judge all the heathen world, and condemn them for want of christian knowledge, so neither will I utterly condemn every poor soul in the obscurest corners of a christian nation, for want of such degrees of knowledge as to me seem necessary to salvation, to all that know and read the new testament. I grant, that God, in his word, does not seem to give encouragement to their hope of heaven, nor allow their communion with christians on earth: But the final condemnation of them is alone with him. And after all that we can say, every person must judge for himself, which articles are necessary in order to his own salvation; and every church must judge for itself, to regulate it's own communion; and God alone is a superior judge, with regard to the one or the other.

Note fourth, I do not think every one of these articles necessary to be expressly insisted on, and professed by every communicant; but so many only as the church



shall think necessary, in order to give them a reasonable satisfaction that he knows and believes the rest.

Note fifth, Though I esteem it necessary that every communicant make known his belief of such articles as the church judges fundamental and necessary some way or other, yet I am far from confining him to any proposed human forms of expression; as I shall shew under the next question.

SECTION V. I proceed now to the second sort of knowledge that is necessary to christian communion; and that is, a "knowledge of all those things that are necessarily implied in the enjoyment or practice of this communion;" or, in short, thus: We must know what communion is, and how to communicate, before we can practise this duty.

This sort of knowledge includes these particulars.

1. If I should say it is necessary to be baptized before we communicate at the Lord's table, I should have far the greatest part of christians on my side; and if baptism be necessary, it is necessary also to know the nature of baptism, the end and design of baptism, the meaning of being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, and the manner of performing it, whether it must be done by dipping or sprinkling, or whether both be not lawful, and whether baptism in infancy be sufficient.

2. It is necessary also, that a person should know what is the nature of the Lord's supper; that it is to be performed by breaking of bread, and distributing that and the wine amongst a christian assembly; that the bread and wine are both to be blessed, and what is the nature of that blessing; what the bread and wine represent; what is the design of breaking and distributing them; who are the persons that must do this: And a woman must know, whether women are to be admitted to the Lord's supper.

3. That several persons, who make a credible profession of christianity, must agree to meet together for christian worship, at the same time, and in the same place, in order to celebrate this ordinance; and that it is not to be received alone, because it is an ordinance of communion.

Without the knowledge of these things, I do not see how any person can communicate in the sacred and special ordinances of the gospel in an orderly manner, or with spiritual profit.

Thus have I endeavoured to open the way for persons to form their judgment upon this difficult and important question, what are those "articles of the christian religion, the knowledge of which is necessary to communion;" and I hope I have kept the middle way between a libertinism of principles, and a narrow uncharitable spirit; Wherein I have failed, I shall be glad to be set right in a spirit of meekness.

## QUESTION

## Q U E S T I O N      V I I I .

*In what words and expressions must our faith be professed, in order to communion? And in what manner must we profess it?*

SECTION I. **T**HIS has been a famous and notable question in all ages of the church. National churches, synods, assemblies or councils of bishops, presbyters, and learned men, have established certain sets of fundamental articles and express forms of confession; and by these forms persons are to be tried, that desire admission to their communion. Others, who have thought this yoke and burden imposed upon the conscience too heavy and intolerable, have maintained, that no forms of confession are necessary, besides the very words of scripture; and that he who agrees to these words, has a right to christian communion, though perhaps he may understand or explain them in a sense never so different from the church, whose communion he desires.

Now to speak my own sentiment with freedom here, I think these are two extremes; and the best medium that I can find for all the purposes of peace and truth is, that every man should confess his faith in his own words, which I shall endeavour to make evident by a particular review of each method.

I grant, that it seems a very natural and plausible argument, that since God has written down all needful christian truths and duties in the holy scripture, we can chuse no better words to confess them in, than those which God himself has given us for our instruction in those truths and duties: But if we consider the affairs of the christian world, the experience of mankind, the practice of heretics and deceivers, as well as the reason of things, we shall find that, though the words of scripture are sufficient to teach us all the necessary parts of christianity, yet the mere repetition of them, or subscription to them, cannot give sufficient proof, that the person so professing, has any understanding of them; or has any true christian knowledge. An idiot, or an idle boy, may learn twenty of the noblest and most comprehensive sentences of scripture without book: a very ignorant person, or a man of most erroneous and destructive principles may repeat any words of scripture, and profess to believe them, while the one has a quite contrary meaning under those words, and the others have no meaning at all. Now surely such sort of professions can never be counted a sufficient evidence of christian knowledge, and consequently can never give him a right to the holy communion.

But because this point is of great importance, I shall debate it at large as a distinct question by itself.

SECTION II. It will be replied then immediately, "If the words of scripture are not a sufficient test in this case, may not confessions of faith, drawn up by wise and good men, be made a test of christian knowledge?"

I answer, no, by no means; and that for these three reasons: It will admit such as ought not to be admitted, it will exclude such as ought not to be excluded, and it will endanger or infringe christian liberty.

Reason I. This may admit such persons as ought not to be admitted; for such forms of doctrine, drawn up by other men, will be liable to the same inconveniences



that will attend any scriptural form of words: A child, or an idiot, may learn and repeat them by heart; a very ignorant person, or one who is very erroneous, may profess and subscribe them in his own sense: For when such forms have continued some time in the world, men of very heretical notions and tempers, being in danger of being excluded from the church by such a test, will contrive and find how to put some perverse sense upon the words, and thus evade the force, and disappoint the design of them, as they have done in all ages with the words of scripture.

Reason II. This may exclude such persons as ought not to be excluded; For if a person of a truly christian spirit, and of a pious and unblemished character should happen to differ from this form of human articles but in one sentence, or even in one word, he cannot honestly assent to, nor subscribe the whole form, though he is perfectly of the same mind in all things, except in that minute point; and yet for this little inconsiderable difference, he must be excluded the communion of the church, and perhaps be liable to all the immediate inconveniencies of such an exclusion, as much as if he denied every article.

There are no synods, or councils of christian bishops or presbyters, even though the laity have been mingled with them, but have put into their articles and confessions some little party notions, as well as the great and necessary truths of the gospel. They have ever had an itch to determine some questions about meats, and days, and circumstances, and ceremonies, either in faith or worship, as well as the most undoubted and fundamental points of christianity. Mint, and anise, and cummin, have been ever creeping into confessions of faith among the weightier matters of faith and love. Now if subscribing to a whole set of articles be the test of communion, then for not eating flesh or herbs, or for want of the anise and the cummin, a man is excluded the church as much as if he wanted faith and love; which is a most unreasonable thing, and would directly contradict that great canon of the apostle, *Rom. xiv. 1.* "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations."

Reason III. It will endanger or infringe christian liberty. The imposition of human forms of profession has been a heavy burden and sore bondage, under which most parts of the christian church have groaned in almost in every age. It has been a sore temptation to many thousands to strain and subdue those words to new significations, to various and very foreign senses, in order to bend their consciences to a compliance with them; and it has oftentimes been made a hateful engine and instrument of quarrels and schisms, of reproaches and sharp persecutions to many sincere and honest souls, that could not warp their sincerity, nor subdue their consciences to such a compliance. Whence arises the severity of the inquisition in *Spain* and *Portugal*, and the compliances of the *Jews* there, to profess the *roman* faith? It is true, no human method is perfectly free from all inconveniencies, yet I would not willingly encourage such a method which has often had such mischievous and impious effects, and has always such danger attending it.

Yet I am very much of the mind that articles of religion, confessions, catechisms, and short summaries of the christian faith, are very useful and necessary amongst the churches of *Christ* for several reasons; and particularly,

1. "To give a short and compendious view of the chief and most necessary points of the christian religion, which lie scattered up and down in many distant places of scripture:" And for this reason, such books are very profitable for all christian families, to teach the young and the ignorant the sum and substance of what they must believe and practise in order to salvation; for though every thing necessary be plainly contained in the word of God, yet persons that have little time, and little knowledge,

and

and very weak reason, would be at a great loss to collect all their faith and duty from so large a book as the bible is, without some teacher. They would want some instructor, who might lay these things together in an easy method, or some systems, confessions, or catechisms, wherein it is done already. Though these catechisms and confessions should be examined by the word of God, so far as every person is capable, and should be no farther received than they bear a conformity thereto by all that are capable of such examination.

2. Such articles, or summaries of the christian religion, are useful "to hold forth to the world what are in general the sentiments of such a particular church, or churches:" And this is proper on many accounts, so it is of use in order to make the way to their communion evident and easy, and that other christians may know whether they agree with them in what is essential to christianity, and may judge, whether they should seek or desire constant or occasional communion with them; and that other churches may judge whether they should admit their members to communion: This also may tend to encourage more zealous and hearty consultations, and mutual assistances toward the support of their common christianity, provided that these articles are drawn up with judgment; and these things are managed with prudence and charity.

Such are, or should be, the articles of the church of *England*, which proclaim her doctrine and discipline to the world: Such are, or should be, the *Westminster* assembly's confession of faith, or that of the *Savoy*, and the two catechisms, which shew the faith and worship of the *english* dissenters: Such are, or should be, the confessions of the foreign reformed churches; of all which it may be said in general, they are very good summaries of the christian religion, however they may differ in lesser points and circumstances. All these have been of unspeakable advantage in the churches of *Christ*, not only to train up children and families in the knowledge of divine truths, but to hold forth to all the world upon what foundations the protestant churches are built, and to declare what their faith is, and what their practice.

I would not be understood, as though I thought such confessions of faith necessary to be drawn up and kept in all churches for these ends; for many of the primitive churches for a hundred years or more, managed their affairs without any such formal confessions, at least without any so large ones, generally approved and delivered down to posterity. The constant preaching and praying in the churches, and mutual communication of christians, did notify to their fellow-christians and fellow-churches, their consent in the most necessary and important articles of faith and worship. But it is certain, that since churches are more multiplied, and errors more abundantly increased, there are many expedencies that attend such a declared and public consent, or harmony of several churches, in the same general points of doctrine and duty.

I grant that there have been some great inconveniencies attending these national confessions and articles, such as the nailing down certain degrees of reformation to everlasting imperfection, and the settling some mistakes for whole nations and future ages; we in *Great Britain* need not run far to seek for instances of this, whether we dwell in the north or south part of it.

But these inconveniencies may be avoided, if we and our fathers had but observed two things. 1. That such articles need not be drawn up in the strictest terms of any particular party, but with allowance of some just degrees of latitude for different sentiments; nor let such articles descend into a determination of too many particulars in things that are of little moment in christianity; and 2. I would have it always secured, that this precise form of words be never imposed on any person whatsoever



as a test of christianity, of communion, of ordination, &c. to be subscribed or acknowledged by assent or consent; at least it ought never to be done without the allowance of such limitations, explications, and exceptions which might secure the consciences of pious christians from all unnecessary bonds and fetters.

SECTION III. The only way therefore that I know of to secure the just christian liberty, both of churches and persons, is this, "That every person who proposes himself to communion must confess his faith in his own words;" or by an open and friendly conference with the ministers, officers, or deputed persons of the church, he must give them satisfaction in what sense he understands the holy scriptures, in momentous and fundamental points; and make it appear that he knows and believes all the necessary articles of christianity: And, as I said before, they must take heed not to make more articles necessary than *Christ* has done by the rule of his word, and they should acknowledge themselves satisfied with such a profession, as may be sufficient to manifest a person to be a good christian, without descending into nice particularities of opinion, and points of less importance. Whether persons of divided sentiments in lesser matters should be received to fixed or to occasional communion only, shall be discussed afterward.

Where there is any just ground of suspicion that a person holds such errors, as in the opinion of the church are exceeding dangerous, if not damnable, there surely the church has a right to require that he declare himself free from those errors, and give his sense of scripture in opposition to them, so far as to give satisfaction to the church: But he is not bound to do it in any form of words proposed to him, or imposed upon him by others: but only in words of his own choosing; because the design of their enquiry, and of his confession, is to profess his own sense of scripture, or his own faith, and not theirs: And the church must afterward judge, whether the declared sense of the proposed communicant, or candidate, agree with their sense, sufficient for communion in the special ordinances of the gospel.

Hereby the truth and extent of a man's own knowledge is much better found out, than by any form of words whatsoever, human or divine, that can be proposed to him for assent or subscription. Hereby the liberty of the person desiring communion is secured from impositions, in that he is not confined to any set of words, but has the whole range of his mother-tongue to tell what he believes, and to express his own sense of scripture. Hereby the church also has it's full liberty of judging the character and profession of the person admitted to their communion, whether he believe the words of scripture in such a sense, as the church thinks necessary to salvation, and sufficient for practising and enjoying this sacred fellowship.

This is the way to deal with others, as we would think it reasonable others should deal with us, according to the rule of our blessed Saviour. This is acting according to the professed protestant principle, not to impose on the conscience of others, but to let every one judge for himself concerning his own personal actions, and let the church judge for itself concerning it's social actions.

Thus by the influence of the blessed Spirit, which is a Spirit of truth and peace, christians may walk together by this rule, to the glory of God and their own edification; and peace and truth may be honourably maintained, so far as we are capable in this imperfect state.

SECTION IV. An enquiry may arise here, "Whether a confession of faith in writing may not serve the same purposes, as well as a conference?"

It

It is my judgment that no confessions of faith, delivered in writing, can be sufficient to give evidence of christian knowledge, except there has been some personal conference before or after the writing of this confession, whereby it may appear that the person well understands what he has written; or at least, unless there be some other very evident and convincing proofs that the person who writes it is truly sincere, and would not dare to impose upon a church, by any written confession, that which is not the real belief and sense both of head and heart.

And by this means that scandal and reproach will be taken away from the churches, of receiving members merely upon a written confession of faith and hope, which perhaps was drawn up by some other hand, and which has neither been the work of the head, nor heart of the person who desires communion.

## Q U E S T I O N IX.

*Where the seclusion from christian communion carries temporal inconveniencies with it, hath a particular church the power to seclude a person merely for want of orthodoxy?*

SECTION. I. **S**INCE I have put the test of knowledge sufficient for christian communion upon the final judgment of the church, and their satisfaction in the orthodoxy of a communicant, it is necessary I should answer this great objection, viz. Suppose a *socinian*, a professed *pelagian*, or an *antinomian* of the grossest kind, should declare that he has been very sincere in searching the scriptures to find the truth, should he be secluded from communion, because he doth not appear in his confession orthodox enough to satisfy the church? And is it not somewhat like persecution, when being rejected by the church he shall lie under some reproach, and sustain temporal damage in his reputation among his neighbours?

Answer I. It is certain that persons who give not just evidence of true christianity, ought not to be received to the special ordinances of christian worship, and enjoy christian communion: Now those who believe not the necessary, fundamental, and essential doctrines of the christian religion cannot properly be called true christians, whatsoever general profession they may make of believing the bible, or being the disciples of *Christ*: Therefore such are not to be received.

A man may profess to be very sincere in searching the scriptures to find out truth: but of real inward sincerity, as well as inward christianity, God only is the judge; and how valuable a qualification soever sincerity may be, if it could be found in any persons in *England* who are not true christians, and how far soever it may go towards acceptance with God in the secret of his mercy, yet it is not the profession of sincerity, but of christianity, that gives a person right to the fellowship of a christian church: For God in his revealed word has not bid us receive all that are sincere, but all that believe or have received *Christ*, or all that profess to be true christians. And in this case I know no judge on earth superior to the church, with which communion is desired, and the officers thereof. These must determine whether the profession of christianity be credible, or no, as I have proved before under the second question.

Answer II.



Answer II. Those temporal inconveniencies that a man may happen to sustain among his neighbours, by being excluded from a particular church for want of true faith, are no part of that church's act in refusing him, nor a necessary consequent thereof; but only a mere occasional or accidental inconvenience, to which all human affairs are subject in this imperfect state. Now this is evident, because in a heathen nation the rejection of a person from a christian church for want of such faith would be honourable, and his neighbours would like him the better for it; though it happens in a christian nation that his neighbours may reproach him; but still this event is no part of the church's act, who ought to love him as a man, and do all due offices of kindness to him, even while they cannot receive him as a true christian.

Answer III. Though we are not to do the least hurt to any person because he doth not hold the christian faith, yet we are allowed and encouraged to love good christians better than those that are not so: We are commanded to "love our enemies, and do good to them that hate us," *Matth. v. 44.* but we are told, *Matth. x. 41, 42.* that "he that doth the least benefit to a prophet or disciple, as such, shall have a peculiar reward." We are in a special manner required to "love the brotherhood." *1. Pet. ii. 17.* "to love one another." *John xv. 12, 17.* "and to do good to all, but especially to the household of faith," *Gal. vi. 10.* Nor can the withholding that degree of love from an heathen, which belongs to a pious christian, be justly called persecution or hardship, any more than my neighbour may complain that I persecute him, because I do not love him so well as my brother or my father.

Give me leave to add in this place, that though the temporal inconvenience of shame or disreputation is not the necessary consequent of an exclusion from a church for want of faith, yet these inconveniencies may certainly and justly attend the exclusion of a person for want of good morals. And St. Paul plainly intimates it, *1 Cor. v. 9, 10, 11.* where he permits them to "keep company with heathen fornicators, extortioners or idolaters, and to eat with them if they are invited," chapter x. verse 27. But he forbids them to allow the same degree of civility to "a fornicator, extortioner, or idolater, who calls himself a brother, or a christian, with such a one, he says, we should keep no company, not so much as to eat with him." So in *2 Thess. iii. 6, 11, 14.* concerning disorderly christians and busy-bodies that will not work to maintain themselves, the apostle says, "withdraw yourselves from every such brother," which may signify a withdrawment from spiritual or from civil communion with him, or perhaps include both. He forbids the *Thessalonians* to have any "company with him, that he may be ashamed;" *2 Thess. iii. 14.* and the reason seems to be this: These practices are justly accounted shameful by the light of nature, and among the heathens; now when a man professes so holy a religion as christianity is, and yet practises these shameful vices, he is guilty of a double crime, and aggravates his iniquity; he is a hypocrite and a deceiver, as well as a vicious man, and the apostle exhorts the church to make him know and feel the shame of it.

SECTION II. Another objection a-kin to the former, seems naturally to rise here, and to want an answer too, viz. Suppose a man be a real and hearty christian, holding all the necessary articles of the christian faith, and he proposes himself to communion with a church of narrow and uncharitable principles, who make more fundamentals than *Christ* has made, shall such a man be excluded from communion, merely for want of orthodoxy in the judgement of an unskilful church?

Answer.

*Answer.* Without doubt it is a criminal thing in any assembly, or church of *Christ*, to imagine and create new fundamentals, and impose them upon others, or to establish narrow and uncharitable rules of communion; yet it is possible that such a church may act in the sincerity of their hearts, for the honour of *Christ*, and the purity of his ordinances; many such churches there have been in our age, and more in the age of our fathers; and though it be faulty in them to exclude true christians, yet they must still be the visible judges of the fitness of persons for their own visible communion, and they are accountable for their conduct only to *Christ*, their supreme Lord and judge.

It is better, in my opinion, therefore, that a person who is a real christian, should join himself to some other distant church, though it may be with some inconvenience; or perhaps it may be better that he should live without ordinances of special communion, which are not absolutely necessary to salvation, than that he should break the settled peace of a church, which walks with God in faith, and holiness, and comfort, though their principles of communion may be a little too narrow and uncharitable, and not to be vindicated. No man ought to come into a voluntary society, and become a member thereof, without the consent of the society, though perhaps they unjustly refuse to give their consent. They must answer it to *Christ*, their judge, at the great day. There is nothing in this world perfectly free from all inconveniences; prudence and christianity ever direct us, of two evils, to chuse the least.

## Q U E S T I O N X.

*Whether a profession to believe the express words of scripture, without any explication, be an evidence of knowledge sufficient for christian communion?*

SECTION I. **T**HOUGH what I have already said under the former questions, might be sufficient to answer the present enquiry, yet since in several ages of the church, and especially in times of rising error this controversy has been moved, I shall spend some time in sifting it thoroughly, and endeavour to lead my reader to such a determination of it, as may give a just satisfaction to an honest and humble enquirer.

By the express words of scripture, I here intend the words expressed in our *english* bible; or the original *greek* and *hebrew* words translated into some other *english* words; for it is evident, that the *greek* and *hebrew*, can be of no use to admit plain christians into *english* churches.

When I say without any explication, I mean, without explaining the sense of those scriptural words so translated, by other words or phrases; also without any manner of influence or consequence drawn from those words, though it lie never so plain and open. Without explication signifies, where the person proposing himself to communion assents to the words of scripture, but refuses to explain in what sense he understands those words; and neither will own or deny any other articles or propositions that may offered him as terms of communion, though deduced from the words of



scripture with never so much evidence; nor will confess his faith, even in the most important and necessary points, in any other words but those of his bible.

When I mention knowledge sufficient for christian communion, it is not to be understood, as if knowledge were the only thing necessary; for in order to christian communion, there is also required a professed subjection to all the known duties of christianity, and a conversation answerable to this profession: But the present enquiry is, whether the express words of scripture are a sufficient test of that knowledge, which is one requisite to communion.

Now let the question be proposed in the fullest and fairest manner thus. "Whether a person's professing to believe the *english* bible itself, or subscribing, assenting to, or repeating any form of words expressly taken out of any *english* translation, without any manner of explication or inference, can be an evidence of christian knowledge, sufficient to demand admission to the Lord's supper, with a christian church in *England*?"

Those that assert the affirmative in this question, are of two sorts; either persons that have entertained some sentiments in the important points of christianity different from the common faith of the churches, and would shelter those opinions under the express words of scripture, though they explain them in their own sense; or they are persons that heartily maintain the common faith, but through an unlimited excess of charity are afraid of narrowing the terms of christian communion, lest they should exclude some sincere christians out of the church; they are jealous of losing their christian liberty, and are afraid of having conscience oppressed by an imposition of any confessions of faith, or articles of communion, drawn up in the words of fallible men.

Those that hold the negative in this question are also of two sorts; either such as have a narrow and uncharitable spirit, and refuse their communion to all christians that will not assent, consent, or subscribe to every word and expression contained in their articles, confessions and human forms; or they are such as maintain a just and reasonable charity towards all that they can hope to be sincere christians, and dare not exclude any persons duly qualified from the holy communion: They would also secure christian liberty in the full extent that *Christ* has given it to his people; but they are zealous for the faith once delivered to the saints, for the purity of the gospel, for the honour of *Christ* in his churches, and the true profit and pleasure of christian communion in holy ordinances; nor would they willingly indulge such an excessive complaisance instead of charity, and such a licentious freedom of opinions in their community, as would tend to the destruction of all that is valuable in the communion of the churches of *Christ*.

I must confess myself at present to stand on the negative side, and I hope I may rank myself among the latter sort of them. I cannot yet persuade myself that a mere assent to the words of scripture, without any explication, is a sufficient rule by which churches should judge of their communicants knowledge; and the reasons that influence and constrain me to be of this mind, I shall lay down at large in the following sections; yet I shall endeavour to shew in the end of my discourse, how a just liberty may be secured, both to single christians and to churches, and the sacred bonds of charity maintained, without a licentious indulgence of all sort of heresies and errors in the same church.

SECTION II. The first argument against the confinement of churches, to express words of scripture in judging of the knowledge of their communicants, is this, "that

“that the greatest and best end that has ever been aimed at in this method, can never be attained by it.” The greatest and best design of it is to secure christians from all imposition of human forms, and from making confessions of faith drawn up in the words of fallible men, a test of knowledge in the things of God: But this method is no effectual security; for since the inspired words of *greek* and *hebrew* can be no test of knowledge in *english* churches, a confession must be made in words of *english*: Now all *english* words, into which the scripture is, or may be translated, are the words of fallible men; and no person can be infallibly sure in some difficult and controverted texts, that they do fully and truly express the sense of the sacred originals.

I grant here that for private christians to search their *english* bibles, and find the matters of their salvation, there is abundantly sufficient certainty of the truth of every translation in general, that it clearly declares all that is of such importance: Because whatsoever is necessary to salvation, is sufficiently contained and revealed, not in one or two, but in various texts of scripture, though perhaps not always in express words; and in most of these texts learned men generally agree about the mere translation of them: This need create no manner of scruple to sincere and humble christians in their own knowledge faith and practice. The *english* bible is gloriously sufficient for the salvation of every humble christian in *England*. The *english* gospel has saved many thousands, without any skill or knowledge of other languages.

But in this controverted case, when men assert that a confession of express words of scripture shall be sufficient to purge any man from the charge of heresy, or give him a right to demand christian communion, even where his opinions are justly suspected, I must take notice here that some of these controverted and difficult texts may naturally come into question; such as those which seem to favour any heresies, and those which seem to guard against them. Now in such a case as this, the mere translating of the words oftentimes determines the sense of them: the translation of such a text is a sort of interpretation of the meaning of it; and then, what translation of any particular text, shall be the standard of orthodoxy for all our churches? Shall that which is public and established by the magistrate have this honour? But who gave it this authority over all the churches? Man or God? Shall any private translation of learned and pious men met in council, determine the sense for all communions? But whence had they this power? Much less can the translation of any single person be a public standard.

Wandering over all nations and churches, and surveying all the various pretences to such a power, I cannot find where to fix the sole of my foot, but on the only protestant principle, viz. “That as each person with regard to his own conduct in sacred things, must judge of the sense of scripture for himself, using the best helps of translators and expositors that he can obtain; so each community using the same helps, must judge for themselves of the sense of the word of God, with regard to their conduct in admitting persons to partake of sacred ordinances among them.” Therefore that particular church whose communion is desired, must determine whether any human words, in which a person’s faith is confessed, are orthodox in their sense, or no; whether they do truly answer the end of such a confession, or no; and include the necessary articles of the christian faith; and whether they give sufficient evidence of a man’s knowledge in christianity, in order to admit him to their communion.

Suppose a modern *socinian*, or a more orthodox man, should refuse the common *english* translation of the first chapter of St. *John*’s gospel, and confess his faith in



words of his own translation thus. "In the beginning was reason, and reason was with God, and reason was God:" Suppose an *athanasian* refuses the *english* translation of *Rev. iii. 14.* where *Christ* is called "the beginning of the creation of God," and says, *ερχομαι* ought to be translated the "head of God's creation," lest *Christ* be represented as a creature, and he will put this text into his confession of faith. Suppose an *arian*, an *antinomian*, an *antipomorphite*, a *pelagian*, a *calvinist*, each confess their faith in the words of scripture of their own translation; none of these *english* words, are in the strictest and properest sense, the words of God, but the words of fallible men; and the particular church whose communion is sought must necessarily interpose with their own sense of scripture, according to the best advantages they have: They must interpose, I say, so far as to judge, whether any of these persons have so interpreted those controverted texts, in which each chuses to confess his faith, as to express aright what they believe to be the necessary articles of christianity; and though there be no necessity, that a church and its members should agree in the sense of every text, yet there must be finally such a sense of some scriptures, given or assented to by the person desiring communion, as may satisfy that church that he has knowledge sufficient for it. Now this may be done without an imposition of any set human forms of words, as I have shewn before.

### SECTION III. My second argument is this.

To make a mere confession of express words of scripture a sufficient test of knowledge to demand christian communion, denies that liberty to some christians, which it indulges to others; nay, it denies the same liberty to a whole community of christians, or to their ministers, which it indulges to each catechumen, or to every single person that offers himself to their communion. I make it appear thus.

Each single person that offers himself to communion with a particular church, has liberty given him by this rule, to put his own sense on the commands of *Christ* in demanding of communion; but the ministers or members of this church, are not allowed this liberty to put their own sense on the commands of *Christ* about receiving him. Perhaps they know by discourse and conversation, that this person denies some articles of the christian faith which they think necessary, while he confesses the words of scripture, and abuses them to a pernicious sense; yet he has liberty to impose himself on their communion, because he thinks he is fit for it in his own sense of scripture; but they cannot, according to this rule reject him, though in their sense of scripture they think him unfit.

According to his own interpretation of the bible, he says, he owns all the fundamental articles: According to their interpretation, they say, he denies some of them; yet this test opens the door of admission to him, whensoever he demands entrance, and does not permit them to shut it.

They believe the scripture forbids them to receive such to christian fellowship, who have not received the christian faith, yet this rule allows them not to forbid him their fellowship, though they think he denies the faith in some necessary parts of it. They think, according to their sense of the word of God, that he has no appearing right to the kingdom of heaven, and consequently that he has no right to enter into the church or kingdom of *Christ* on earth; but according to this rule they are bound to admit him, even contrary to their own sentiments and consciences. He has liberty to demand, but they have none to refuse.

This seems to me like a restraint of the liberty of a multitude of professed christians, to secure or indulge the liberty of a catechumen, which is far from impartial justice,

justice, in the very nature of things. Now certainly *Christ* would never impose such a rule of communion on his churches, which should not be reconcileable to common justice, and to that great and general rule of his, "Do to others as you would have others do to you."

SECTION IV. My third argument is this: That a child, an idiot, or a very ignorant man, may repeat any short form of confession, drawn up in the express words of scripture, and say, he believes it; or he may subscribe or assent to any longer form, even the whole bible itself: But surely a child, an idiot, or an ignorant person who have not a real knowledge and understanding of the things of christianity, are not fit to be received into a christian church, nor admitted to the Lord's supper. There is no formal repetition of a few words by memory, can give any proof of christian knowledge in the heart; no assent or subscription to a book, as big as the bible, can make it evident that a man understands five lines of it: Yet if this be the proper test, such ignorant creatures must be received to the noblest and highest ordinance of *Christ* upon earth.

Suppose a poor wretch that wants bread, and knows almost nothing of christianity, hears that such a congregation maintain their poor well, and in order to secure a good maintenance, he gets a few scripture-expressions on the most important points without book; his life has been obscure, unknown, and, so far as appears, not any way scandalous; he proposes himself to communion with this church, he repeats the creed, or, if he be desired to make a larger confession, he takes up his bible and says, "I believe every word that is contained between these two leathern covers to be true; and I resolve to live according to it." This poor wretch may demand admission according to such principles.

If you say, there must be some enquiry made, whether he understands the words of scripture, or no, then there must be some determined sense put upon those words of scripture as proposed by the church, or as assented to by the communicant; and thereby you depart from your pretended rule, that the express words of scripture are a sufficient test of knowledge.

I grant, that after the utmost search and enquiry into christian profession, and piety of conversation, some hypocrites will creep into the best-ordered and purest churches; human affairs are so constituted: We cannot know the hearts of men: Tares and wheat must grow together till harvest: But it is sufficiently plain in scripture, that they ought not to admit those to christian communion, who understand not the first principles of christianity; and therefore we ought to seek some satisfactory evidence of a thing that may so easily be found, viz. christian knowledge, and not bind ourselves to such a rule of admission as can give no evidence, whether a communicant has christian knowledge, or no.

I might add under this argument also, that as a child, an idiot, or a person ignorant, or a heathen may claim communion according to this rule; so a child or a heathen is a sufficient judge who has knowledge enough to be admitted to the fellowship of a church of *Christ*; for a child, or a heathen, can tell whether the person proposing himself, subscribes his bible, or no; whether he declares his general assent to all the scripture, or no; or whether he repeats any express words of scripture aright, or no. As there is no need of any real understanding in communicants upon this principle, so there is no need of any judgment or prudence in the churches of *Christ*, in order to receive them: No need of elders or governors, men of wisdom and discretion to use the keys of the church, where the door is so wide, that half the children



dren in a parish may go into the church at once; and it opens so easily, that a child or a fool can manage it.

SECTION V. A fourth argument against this test of communion is this. If a mere assent to the express words of scripture be a sufficient test of christian knowledge to claim admission into a church, this opens the door for an endless variety of different and contrary opinions, and practices, to enter into the same church; multitudes of heresies, that relate both to faith and practice, may swarm in the same communion; truths and errors, fundamental, and not fundamental, will be mingled here; errors tolerable, and intolerable; extremely dangerous, if not damnable and destructive, will be admitted: For all that profess them in our age and day, in protestant nations, will subscribe to the bible as the sufficient rule of faith and practice; nay, all persons that are not heathens, deists, *Jews* or *mahometans*, may claim a place in the churches of *Christ*.

Now let us first recount some of those various doctrines that will hereby be encouraged in the same communion, and then consider what will be the inconveniencies attending such a mixed community.

First, Let us recount the various doctrines and their professors, that will be encouraged in the same communion by this rule.

1. The *anthropomorphites* say, that God hath proper parts, hands and feet, and eyes, and ears, and is really in the shape of a man, according to the express words of scripture taken in a plain literal sense. One of this opinion, as I am informed, lately proposed himself to christian communion.

2. The *allegorists* on the other hand, explain in a metaphorical and figurative sense, whatsoever expressions they find in scripture, whose literal sense does not agree with their notions. Upon this principle some that deny the proper sacrifice and satisfaction of *Christ* say, that his atonement, redemption and sacrifice, are but figurative expressions. Others believe salvation to be obtained only through *Jesus Christ*, but they mean *Christ*, or the light within them.

3. The *arians* say, that *Jesus Christ* was a mere creature, made out of nothing, before all other creatures, and superior to angels, endued with divine power, and called God, and that he assumed flesh without a human soul.

4. The *fabellians* believe, that the blessed trinity, the Father, Son, and holy Spirit, doth by no means intend three proper distinct persons, but is a mere trinity of names and manifestations, modes and relations in the godhead or divine nature, and that the Son of God was not properly a person before his incarnation.

5. The *socinians* derived from the old *samosatenians* and *photinians* say, that there is no such trinity of persons in the divine nature, as the *athanasians*, and the schoolmen maintain. That *Jesus Christ* is a mere man, and had no being before he was conceived of the blessed virgin. That *Christ* did not make any proper satisfaction for the sins of men. That the soul sleeps with the body, and rises with it at the resurrection; and after all, they acknowledge that the light of nature is sufficient to direct men to eternal happiness, and that nothing is to be believed in the sublimest points of religion, but what is to be understood and judged of by our reason.

6. *Enthusiasts*, on the other hand, believe that reason is of no use in things of religion. That human learning doth more hurt than good among christians. That there is no need at all of it for ministers of the gospel. That our own labour for our salvation signifies nothing, and therefore they wait for sensible impressions of the holy spirit, to move them to the common duties of christianity.

7. The

7. The *pelagians* say, that there is no imputed or inherent original sin. That man after his fall, had a proper power and free will in himself to become truly pious, or grossly wicked; and to do either good or evil. That men may obtain the favour of God by the merit of their own good works.

8. *Arminians*, or *remonstrants*, generally hold, that there is no certain and absolute election or redemption of particular persons unto salvation, that there is no need of the almighty, sovereign, and efficacious influences of the Spirit, in order to conversion. That believers may fall and perish eternally; and that there is no certain perseverance of the saints.

9. The *antinomians* hold, that all true believers were justified from eternity. That an elect person is never chargeable with sin before God. That the moral law of God is not of perpetual obligation to the consciences of believers. That sin can do a believer no real injury.

10. The strict *calvinists* deny every single proposition, and peculiar sentiment, that I have here mentioned under all the foregoing heads, and call them all errors; and believe the contrary propositions to be divine truths delivered in the scriptures.

I might here add a variety of doctrines and sects, that have in former ages troubled and divided the church, viz. the *eutychians*, who supposed that the two natures of *Christ* were so united and blended together, that the human was lost in the divine. The *apollinarians*, who taught that *Christ* brought his flesh from heaven, and that he had no human will, but only a divine will. The *donatists*, who required the true church to be without sin or spot. The *origenists*, who deny the eternal punishment of sinners, and fancy the devils themselves shall at last be saved.

I might further reckon up a long train of wild and unaccountable opinions which have no settled name, yet all arise from various senses, that the lusts, or the fancies, or humours, or mistakes of men, have put on the express words of scripture: But these are sufficient in this place.

I would not be understood here to intend that every person, to whom any of these names may be affixed by men, believes or professes all the doctrines that are ranged under any of these heads: All that I mean by this catalogue is this, that under these several names in our general and common discourse, all these principles or propositions are usually comprehended and understood.

Note, I have not mentioned the *papists*, because they allow not the bible to be a perfect rule, but build part of their religion on human traditions, and the pretended infallible authority of their church.

But so many of all those sects of christians that I have mentioned, as are found in our day, do all take the bible for their perfect rule of faith and practice, and each of them will subscribe the whole bible, at least in their own translation of it, and profess to believe all the express words of scripture: Now if any confession of express words of scripture, be a sufficient test of christian faith, all these persons have this qualification, and cannot be denied christian communion in any church to which they propose themselves, for want of true christian knowledge.

And now I would ask, what a wretched sort of communion is it, that could be maintained in such a church, of such widely different opinions? What fellowship could they have in hearing the same sermons, in joining in the same prayers, and in all sacred offices? What holy harmony, what order, what peace or christian unity, can be carried on in such a mixed and disagreeing multitude? But I insist no longer on this at present.



SECTION VI. In the prosecution of the fourth argument, I come therefore in the next place to consider, what will be the inconveniencies of making such a large and wide door to the church, and of encouraging such a promiscuous communion: For though all these can never walk and worship together in any peace or order, yet all may be admitted on this foundation.

One great inconvenience is this, viz. Some persons that deny necessary fundamental truths and duties, without which a man cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, may enter into a church on earth, and claim christian communion by this rule of admission: For it may perhaps be doubted, whether all necessary particular articles, as well as general ones, are found in express words in the bible, which I shall afterwards have occasion to enquire into. But if all necessary articles were found there expressly, yet the grossest heretics may consent to those expressions, and explain them only in a metaphorical sense: So the *socinians* explain the expressions of scripture concerning the sacrifice and atonement of *Christ*, and make them all mere metaphors, to signify something of a much inferior nature: But be their explications, and their sense of scripture what it will, yet they may demand christian communion upon this principle, that they subscribe the bible, and every expression in it; though they explain the fundamental and essential articles of it quite away by figures and metaphors.

Indeed this has been the practice of heretics in all ages to run to this refuge, and make the words of scripture their hiding place and defence; having learned well from their subtle teachers, or their own cunning devices, to twist and turn the words of scripture by figures, and tropes, and distinctions, into their own pernicious sense; and this ever will be the practice of persons, grossly erroneous in the things of religion, that yet would appear to agree with the scripture, and hold the christian faith.

They may tell you that *Christ* is their only hope of salvation, and their way to God the Father; but they mean a *Christ* within, or the remains of the light of reason, and the dictates of a natural conscience.

They may assure you, they believe the resurrection of *Christ* from the dead; but they mean nothing but *Christ* within them, in the rising or awaking of the conscience from stupid inactive silence.

They may assent that *Christ* is God, but mean only a metaphorical God, because he is make a king, or governor of the church.

They may profess the whole scripture in their own sense, and in the mean time they may believe such contradictions as these, viz.

I believe; "God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," *Ephes. i. 11.* Yet I believe, that the decrees of God are nothing else but immutable fate, and the necessary connexion of second causes, as Mr. *Hobbs*.

I believe that "God knoweth all his works from the beginning," *Acts xv. 18.* Yet I believe, this foreknowledge is nothing else but a perfect sagacity of mind, and immediate contrivance to turn all things that happen to fulfil his own designs, as effectually as if he really foreknew. So a much better man than Mr. *Hobbs* has explained it.

I believe, that "in the beginning was the word, and the word was God," *John i. 1.* Yet I believe that *Jesus Christ* had no being before he was conceived, and born of the virgin, and that truly and properly he is but a mere man.

I believe, that we must "flee fornication," *1 Cor. vi. 18.* but I believe, that nothing else is intended in all such texts but spiritual fornication, which is idolatry.

I believe, that we must "keep ourselves from idols," and not practise idolatry, <sup>1</sup> *John* v. 21. Yet I believe that we may worship the true God, by idols or images; for the idolatry which is forbidden in the scripture, signifies only the worship of stones, and stocks, and images, for real and true gods.

I believe we are bound to "follow peace with all men." *Heb.* xii. 14. yet I believe we may contend for the faith so earnestly, as to burn heretics.

I believe we must "follow holiness too, without which no man shall see the Lord." *Heb.* xii. 14. yet I am persuaded sin can do no real hurt to a believer.

Now who is there that has any value for the honour of the gospel, for the glory of *Christ*, for the purity of our religion, and the welfare of the church, that would establish such a test of communion, by which all these sort of persons may claim admission? A church composed of such a variety of sects, that differ so widely in points so numerous and so important, would much more resemble the ark of *Noah*, with all manner of creatures in it, clean and unclean, than the fold of *Christ*, where none but his sheep should have admittance, or such as have the visible marks of his sheep upon them.

The other incongruities, inconveniencies, and mischiefs that will necessarily attend a church, founded upon this test of admission, shall be more largely and particularly described in my answer to the next question, to which I refer the reader.

Perhaps it will be said by way of reply to all these arguments, that "where any person professes his faith in the mere words of scripture, and yet makes it appear that he understands them in such an erroneous sense, as is inconsistent with the gospel of *Christ*, or the fundamentals of christianity, such a person ought not to be admitted to christian communion, because he plainly overthrows by his explication, what he asserts by his confession: But where he gives no explication at all, it should be presumed that he believes all necessary truth." To this I answer,

Answer I. That if a confession of faith, in the mere words of scripture, be a sufficient test for church-fellowship, no man who professes those words ought to be excluded, let him explain them how he please; for if the rule of scripture does indeed require you to receive all that profess the faith in scriptural words, no particular and perverse explications whatsoever should break in upon this sacred rule, lest hereby, you who exclude him, set yourself up as a judge of the sense of scripture for other folks, and instead of making the words of scripture your test, you make your own sense of it the test of communion, which is the very thing you pretend to avoid, and which you profess to renounce.

Answer II. I add further, if you allow that a perverse or antichristian exposition of scripture in fundamental points, may exclude a man who professes the words of scripture from the communion, then a just and reasonable suspicion of any person's antichristian exposition of it, may give just ground for enquiry into his sense of it, before he be received to a christian church; even as a just and reasonable suspicion of any man's immorality, gives just ground for a stricter enquiry into his morals; for if he hath not christian faith, he is no more fit for the christian communion, than one who hath not christian practice.

Now suppose a person be a mere stranger to you in his moral life, you ought to make enquiry concerning his morality before you receive him, and not take his virtue for granted: And by the same reason, if he be a mere stranger to you in his faith, you ought to make the same enquiry concerning his sense of scripture, in order to know that he is not an heretic, or that he does not profess scriptural words in an heretical



tical sense; and not always take it for granted, that he believes the scripture in it's true sense.

Thus these two parts of the test of communion, viz. profession of the true faith, and a pious practice, will stand upon the same foot; and a man may be excluded even by your own concession, if he wants either of them, even though he profess the words of scripture. And there ought to be an explicit discovery of both these by the candidate in order to christian communion, and not merely an implicit belief of them in those who are appointed to examine him.

As I grant with you, that where a person has in general a fair moral character among those who know him, we ought not to take up and indulge groundless and unreasonable suspicions of his virtue; so where a person, who appears to be sincere and pious, makes profession of his faith in more general language, we ought not to take up unreasonable and groundless suspicions that he is an heretic. But as in times of universal and spreading corruption of manners, there should be a more strict enquiry into the conversation of every communicant, so in times of spreading error, where scripture words are frequently used in an heretical sense, there ought to be a more strict enquiry into his faith; and it is a very reasonable demand, that he should explain his particular sense of the general words of scripture in fundamental points, and tell what he means by them, that he may not cover gross heresies and antichristian opinions, under the confession and disguise of scriptural language, that so antichristians may not be received into a christian church.

SECTION VII. The last argument I shall propose against making a confession of the express words of scripture a sufficient evidence of christian knowledge is this, that the scripture itself does not directly, and in express words, contain all that knowledge of particular truths and duties that is necessary to christian communion. I say of particular truths and duties, for I own it contains all in generals.

Under the seventh question, I have made it appear evidently, that the knowledge necessary to christian communion, includes in it, both a knowledge of all those things that are necessary to salvation, and a knowledge of all those things that are necessary to practice, and enjoy this communion.

Now if we first survey all those truths and duties that are necessary to salvation, perhaps we might find particular articles, either of faith or practice, that are not set down in most express language in the very words of scripture. I grant, they are all so expressed in general terms, that a mean understanding, and a slight and easy turn of thought, is sufficient to derive from scripture all the particulars that are necessary to salvation; every needful explication, or consequence, lies plain and open to the view of common reason, though it may not be directly expressed in the very letter of scripture.

But I chuse rather to survey those things that are necessary to practice, and to enjoy christian communion; such knowledge as is needful, in order to partake of the Lord's supper in a regular manner in the christian church: And these things are not all contained in express words of scripture, but require something of explication and consequence to make them appear. As for instance.

1. If baptism be necessary before the Lord's supper, it is necessary also to know the nature and design of baptism, the meaning of being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit; and the manner of performing it, whether it must be done by dipping or sprinkling, or whether both be not lawful; and whether baptism in infancy be sufficient. Now all these are not written down in express words of scripture.

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2. It is necessary also that a person should know what is the nature of the Lord's supper; what the bread and wine represent; what is the design of blessing, breaking, and distributing them; who are the persons that must do this: And a woman must know, whether women are to be admitted to the Lord's supper; all which things are not fully and expressly delivered in the very words of scripture.

3. That several persons, who make a credible profession of christianity, must agree to meet together, in order to celebrate christian worship, and partake of this ordinance; and that it is not to be received alone, because it is an ordinance of communion.

I might instance in other things that are necessary attendants on these ordinances, considered as human actions, which the light of nature plainly dictates, and which may be drawn by the most obvious and natural consequences from the directions, or examples of scripture; but they are not found there in express words, nor indeed is there any need of it, since they lie so open to the weakest exercise of reason.

Now to sum up the last argument. If there be any articles of christian belief, or practice, necessary to salvation, or to public christian worship, and to a regular participation of the Lord's supper, which are not laid down and described in the express words of scripture, then may we not conclude, that a mere declaration of the belief of the bible, or any part of it, is not a certain evidence of knowledge sufficient to demand christian communion, where all explications and consequences are utterly refused?

SECTION VIII. The great objection against all my discourse is this; that "since the word of God is a sufficient and perfect rule to direct christians in their faith and practice, the words of scripture are therefore a sufficient and perfect test of christian knowledge." The scripture, say they, is certainly capable of itself to determine all our doctrines, and all our duties; it is sufficient to furnish the man of God perfectly unto all good works, and it is able to make every man wise unto salvation. It was given for this end by the inspiration of God; and it does not stand in need of the assistance of human inferences and explications, in things necessary for christians to believe and practise. *2 Tim. iii. 15, — 17.* Therefore an acknowledgement of the scripture, or the most considerable articles of christianity in the express words of it, is a sufficient test for christian communion.

This argument is very popular, and drawn out into much flowery eloquence, to persuade and captivate the unwary. The writers on this side of the question brighten and flash upon the reader, and, as it were, overwhelm him, if the eye of his judgment be weak, with such dazzling language as this. "What are not the words, which God himself hath written, effectually for all the purposes of christianity, without the addition of the words of men? Is not God wiser than man? And can any man form for himself a better test of knowledge, than God has done? Did not *Christ*, and his Spirit, which spoke by the apostles, know how to express divine truths in the best manner, and in words fittest for every use and service of the christian church? Has our Lord *Jesus Christ* so little consulted the truth and security of his gospel, as well as the peace and welfare of his churches, as not to express every matter necessary to communion, in plain language? Can we, shall we, dare we indulge so unbecoming an opinion of the care of our blessed Lord? Can there be any other words necessary to express his doctrine by, than those which himself has chosen?" Thus the torrent of such a popular harangue drowns all distinctions of things, and carries away the assent before due consideration.



To all this flourish, I answer first by way of concession; that our blessed Lord is all-wise, and has the tenderest care of his church, in providing a sufficiency of helps for every occasion. The holy scripture is complete, and sufficient of itself to teach us all things necessary; and the instructions of it are clear, plain and evident to every humble inquirer: There is no need of any additions of men to this perfect rule, nor are any words that men can invent fitter to express those doctrines and duties, more suitably to the occasion and purpose for which each part of scripture was written, I am abundantly persuaded, that from the book of God every plain christian may easily collect his own duty in the necessary affairs of his salvation, and every man may obtain knowledge enough to fit him for the communion of a christian church.

SECTION IX. But to give a full and direct answer to the force of the foregoing objection, I would lay down these considerations, which may help to remove those glaring rays of rhetoric that diffuse themselves round the argument, impose upon, and dazzle weaker minds, and prevent them from beholding the question in it's true light, which, if once seen in it's proper sense, would be determined with much ease.

Consideration I. It is generally agreed by protestant writers, that not the mere words of scripture, but the sense of it is properly scripture. The words are but the shell in which the divine ideas are conveyed to the mind. It is not the words of the bible, but the sense of it, which has the proper characters of the word of God. If any words or language might pretend to this, surely it must be the *hebrew* and *greek* originals: Now these have no such power upon an unlearned *dane*, or *swede*, a *french* or an *english* man, as is attributed in scripture to the word of God. These words in *greek* would not pierce or divide in sunder the soul and spirit of a barbarian: The gospel in mixed *syriac* language, in which *Christ* himself spoke, would never prove the power of God to the salvation of a *roman*, or a *turk*: Nor could the perfect law of the Lord, in *hebrew*, convert the soul of a *muscovite*. But when these original words are translated into each language, and convey the same divine instruction and sense to different nations; this sense and instruction, which is properly the word of God, work upon the heart, and make a new creature; for the sense of scripture is the same in all languages, though the words are very different. Hence it is plain, that we do not in the least derogate from the honour of the bible, while we declare, that it is the sense of scripture, and not the mere words of it, that must be our rule of duty and practice.

Consideration II. That the mere words of scripture were never given us for a test of truth and error, but the sense of scripture is such a test; much less can we suppose the words of scripture given us for a test of every man's knowledge, in order to christian communion. Those that are of this opinion, profess indeed to pay a most exalted and superlative honour to the holy scripture, in making the very letters and syllables of it so effectual and powerful, to determine all controversies in the christian church with the greatest ease, and to charm and subdue the warring tongues of men to submission and silence: For if an heretic acknowledges these letters and syllables to be divine, no man must open his mouth against him. But surely this is such a honour, as God never designed for letters and syllables; and if I might venture to use so hard a word, I should ask whether it were not a superstitious regard paid to ink and paper? When errors are proposed, we are indeed called to examine them by "the law and the testimony, *Isai.* viii. 20. and it is said, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." But the design of this text is not

to make the very words and syllables the judges of truth, but the meaning and sense of them: I prove it thus.

Suppose I doubt whether *Christ* "made a real and proper satisfaction to the justice of God for the offences of man;" I compare this with the words of scripture, and I find there, that *Christ* "redeemed us from the curse, he bare our sins on his body, he was made a sacrifice for sin, he is our propitiation, or atonement;" but I cannot find the words real and proper satisfaction in scripture; how then must I judge whether this be truth, or no? I cannot do it by the mere words, for these are different; but by it's agreement in sense and meaning with those other scriptural expressions, I find it to be a divine truth.

I prove it by another instance thus. Suppose I am told, that I must "subdue my pride and vanity of mind, and that I must repent of all backbiting and intemperance, of which I have been guilty, if ever I would be saved:" I consult my bible, and there I find that I "must repent of sin, that I must mortify the deeds of the body, that I must crucify the flesh with it's lusts, that I must pluck out my right eye, and cut off my right hand, if I would enter into the kingdom of heaven." Now how shall I know what is my duty? Surely, the literal sense of the words cannot be. How then shall I find my duty, but by explaining the spiritual sense of these metaphors, in which scripture so much abounds? A right hand, and a right eye, signifies those sins which are beloved as those members of the body; and then I must draw such consequences as these, viz. "If sin must be repented of, then backbiting and intemperance must be repented of, for they are sins; and pride and vanity of mind must be subdued for the same reason."

If the words of scripture may not be treated in this manner, and applied to solve any doubt or difficulty by explications and inferences, the scripture cannot be a sufficient test of truth and error; and if this method be allowed, then it becomes also a sufficient test of christian knowledge in order to communion; which is all that I contend for.

Consideration III. Most of the books of scripture were written at different times, and upon very different occasions, to reprove some particular vices, to refute some special errors or heresies, to instruct in some particular affairs relating to doctrine and duty, in such expressions as were most exactly suited, and divinely proper to answer those special designs. The metaphors and figures of speech there used were well known, or well explained in that age, and accommodated to the genius and understanding of those persons, for whose benefit they were first written: And by these divine writings we have sufficient direction to find out all necessary truths and duties at all times, in all nations, and ages of the church, by comparison of things, and just inferences. Now though God foreknew what errors would arise in every age, yet it is impossible that so small a book as the new testament, could mention and refute every error that might possibly arise, or forbid every particular vice or corruption that might spring up in following ages; and all this in express words, and in terms most directly opposing those sins and errors which are almost infinite, and as yet had no being. Therefore without any derogation from the sufficiency of scripture, we may justly allow, that it is possible for wise and pious men, that live in those succeeding ages, to explain the general sense of scripture in such expressions, as may more directly and effectually guard against the sins and heresies of the age; this is certainly needful in order to instruct the ignorant; and some confession of this kind may be proper and necessary in times of error, to keep the communion of the churches of *Christ* pure and holy; yet this also may be done, as I have shewn before,



before, without an express imposition of any set human forms; but it can never be done effectually by making the mere words of scripture a test of communion, which in all ages heretics have learned to pervert to their own sense.

Consideration IV. The sufficiency of scripture, for our rule of faith and practice in revealed religion, does not signify a sufficiency of the bare words and syllables of scripture, to declare every particular article of doctrine or duty in direct and express terms: But that it sufficiently includes and contains them all; so that by a most easy and obvious exercise of reason, all necessary truths and duties may be found, either in express words, or in easy, plain and natural consequences; and that there is no need of old traditions, nor any new inventions of men. The sufficiency of natural light, to direct innocent man in natural religion, does not signify that all the general and particular articles of it were written actually, and constantly abiding in the mind, but that they are plainly and easily deducible by natural reason. So a book is said to be sufficient to teach any art or science, if it contains all the main principles of it, so that all the parts of this art or science, may be very easily learned thereby.

The new testament is sufficient to teach us the holy skill of prayer, because it includes every thing necessary for that duty; and the Lord's prayer has been generally esteemed a perfect model for that part of worship; yet a child may say over all the words of the Lord's prayer, and know not at all how to pray: And if it were possible for a strong memory to repeat all the new testament by heart, it would not be a sufficient proof, that that person was acquainted with the divine skill of praying. So the bible is abundantly sufficient to furnish a preacher for his work; but if he could say never so many of the words of the bible without book, it would not be a proper test of his ability to preach. This spiritual furniture and skill for the performance of praying or preaching, is to be obtained by comparing several parts of the bible together, by learning their sense and meaning, and by drawing proper inferences from several passages of it, and knowing how to apply them to all particular cases in sermons and prayers: The same may be said in proportion concerning the furniture and fitness of a person to be admitted to christian communion. Now in order for a man to manifest that he has this spiritual skill and furniture, he must acquaint me in some other words, what he means by these words of scripture that he can repeat by memory.

It is not at all inconsistent with the clearness and perfection of scripture, that the unlearned should use their reason in finding out doctrines and duties, by comparing scripture with scripture, and drawing general inferences from the practice, example and occasional speeches of *Christ* and his apostles; as it has never been counted inconsistent with the clearness and perfection of it, that learned men must translate the *greek* and *hebrew* into our mother-tongue: For the bible in *greek* and *hebrew*, is more insufficient to lead a poor *english* man to heaven without translation, than an *english* bible is to lead him thither, without the exercise of his reason in explications and inferences.

The plain and natural consequences of scripture, have in a larger sense been often called scripture itself; and have always been justly allowed as sufficient to determine any controversy in religion, or prove any truth, or refute any error. The example of *Christ* and his apostles, shew us the use and the necessity of consequences; they argued in this manner against their opponents, who did not acknowledge their divine commission. *Chillingworth* himself, in that famous paragraph of his which is so often cited, acknowledges that plain inferences from scripture make up part of our religion: The bible, saith he with emphasis, "The bible is the religion of protestants; whatsoever else they believe besides it, and the plain irrefragable indubitable consequences

quences of it, well may they hold it as a matter of opinion, but not as a matter of faith and religion."

Nor is it necessary to the plainness, evidence and strength of any consequences of scripture, that all persons should own them, and none deny them; for the plainest and most open truths have been denied by some persons in all ages, through want of attention, through false education, through the prepossession of other opinions, through the attachment to a party, through obstinacy of temper, and blind zeal: But all the consequences of scripture, that are necessary to faith and practice in order to salvation, are so plain, that a honest, sincere and diligent person, though weak in understanding, may easily find them out by reading, meditation, humble prayer, and readiness to receive the truth in the love of it.

Here let it be noted, that the necessary consequences of scripture, may be called the doctrine of scripture; though the consequences of the doctrines of *Luther*, *Calvin*, or any other man, may not be called their doctrines; because the Spirit of God, who searcheth the deep things of God, well knew all the propositions and consequences that ever could be drawn, and fairly deduced from the words of scripture, when he first inspired the sacred writers; and therefore he designed them all as certain and divine truths. But it is not so with men, who may hold such opinions as are attended with unhappy consequences, which yet they themselves may not be aware of, or perhaps may expressly deny.

Consideration V. The most perfect rule always needs a proper application to every particular case; and this does not at all diminish it's perfection, nor lessen it's perspicuity. Scripture is still the perfect and final judge of truth and duty in things sacred, though every man must apply the words and sense of scripture to his own case, for his own instruction, edification, and salvation; and every church for their own practice of communion, must apply the words of scripture according to their own best judgment. The law is a perfect judge of right and wrong in things civil, though it must be applied, by the reason and wisdom of man, to particular cases. A rule, or square, is not imperfect because it requires the hand of the builder to apply it, in order to measure the house, or the wall. We are not brutes that cannot reason, nor mere white paper, fit to take nothing but the express stamp of letters and syllables; reasoning is one of our noblest powers, and God demands it's exercise: We are bid to search the scriptures, and compare spiritual things with spiritual. It is impossible to transfer, or apply, any general sentence of scripture to particular exhortations, reproofs, instruction, conviction, or comfort for ourselves or others, without deducing consequences, and thereby bringing the general words to our daily present occasions: Nor is it possible for any persons to be admitted into a church of *Christ*, upon just and regular grounds, without comparing their personal characters, their confessions, and their practice with the word of God, by the exercise of our reason, and applying to that particular case, what we derive and infer from general rules, or parallel examples; now all this cannot be done without making use of the consequences of scripture.

Consideration VI. This test of christian knowledge, this supposed rule of communion, is not found among the express words of scripture. I might therefore ask leave of our protestant brethren, who strenuously maintain this principle, to make an address to them, in their own language, thus: "Surely if this rule of christian communion be of such absolute necessity to maintain peace, and secure truth, we may wonder, why it is not written down expressly in scripture. Has *Jesus Christ* so little consulted the peace of his churches, and the truth of his gospel, as to neglect so necessary a rule of church communion, without which you suppose, that neither  
peace



peace nor truth can be maintained? O what a world of strife and confusion in the churches might have been prevented, by an express appointment of the words of scripture, to be the universal test of knowledge for christian communion? Is the scripture so careful to express all things necessary, and yet is this omitted? May I not thence infer, according to your own principles, that this rule of communion is not necessary? Indeed, in my opinion, it is so far from being written in the bible in express words, that by all the exercise of my reason, I cannot derive it from my bible, by any plain or certain consequence; I have not yet seen evidence enough to believe it to be a sufficient, or an appointed rule; much less of so absolute necessity to christian communion, truth or peace."

## QUESTION XI.

*Whether all sorts of protestants may join together as members of the same church?*

SECTION. I. **B**Y the name protestant, I intend not only those that protested against the corruptions of the *roman* church, and the edict of the emperor in *Germany* at the beginning of the reformation, but I conclude also all that hold the same general principle, making the bible the only and perfect rule of faith and manners, and giving every single person a right to judge for himself concerning the sense and meaning of the bible in matters of religion, and to practise according to his own sentiments in things sacred.

Now if the question be put, "whether all such persons professing the same protestant principle with all their different sentiments, may be united in the same church," I answer,

1. It is impossible, and they cannot.
2. It is unlawful, and they ought not.
3. If it were both possible and lawful, yet it is highly inexpedient, and therefore it should not be done.

First, "it is impossible, and they cannot join in the same communion." There are some actions necessary in order to christian communion in worship, which are appointed in general in the holy scripture, but must be performed in some particular and determinate way: Now this in the very nature of things makes it necessary to determine the words of scripture to a particular sense; and different sects of protestants determine these words in such different ways, as will often be exceeding hard, and sometimes utterly impossible, to be reconciled and made consistent in one communion: As for instance,

1. Some cannot in conscience attend upon the ministry of a person, who has not been ordained by the imposition of the hands of a diocesan bishop, for they think him no minister of *Christ*; others refuse him for a minister, who has not had the hands of several presbyters imposed in his ordination; and there are a third sort again, that think either of these two ordinations to be unnecessary, if not unlawful; and believe

him no minister of *Christ*, unless he be chosen by a congregation, and set apart to that work amongst them by fasting and prayer.

Note, that I speak here of those that are each of them strict and rigid in the extremes of their own way, honest and sincere in the main, but zealous and obstinate in their own principles; now these can never join under one ministry, unless their minister has passed through all these three sorts of ordinations, which is not to be expected.

2. Some think it utterly unlawful to pray in public, without a form, lest rash and hasty expressions be "uttered before God," *Eccles. v. 2.* Others think it equally unlawful to use a form of prayer, lest they "quench the Spirit" which is given to teach them to pray, *1 Thess. v. 19. Eph. vi. 18.* and how can these possibly join in the same prayer?

3. Some esteem the Lord's prayer so glorious, so perfect, and so universal a prayer for all times and ages, that it should never be omitted in public worship; others fancy it unlawful to be used at all as a prayer, ever since the Spirit was given to men at the ascension of *Christ*, because it is in their sense a confinement of the Spirit to a form of words.

4. Some think the practice of singing the praises of God to be a necessary part of christian worship, and cannot persuade themselves to live without it; others esteem it a mere antichristian invention, and they dare not be present for a moment in an assembly that sings, lest they give countenance to false worship and superstition; and if any other music be joined to the voice, they count it still more hainous and abominable.

5. Some believe the Lord's supper cannot be celebrated aright at noon, because it was instituted in the evening, and is called a supper; others that live scattered at great distances in a wide country parish, can never meet to communicate in an evening, especially four or five months in the winter; and they think the Lord's supper at noon is a very lawful and proper practice, and necessary to them, because otherwise they cannot attend it.

6. Some suppose, that it is very irreverent and unlawful to communicate in a sitting posture, and think it their duty to kneel, when they receive the seal of the greatest of blessings from the hands of God; others think no other posture of body lawful besides sitting, because it is a feast, and was instituted with the proper gestures at a table; and many foreign protestants esteem sitting to have too much familiarity and irreverence, and kneeling too much like adoration of the bread, and therefore always stand at that ordinance. And here we may suppose some narrow-spirited christians, of each sort, that dare not be present at the sacrament, where a different gesture is used, lest they seem to encourage a sinful practice by their communicating together.

7. Some are persuaded, that none have a right to the communion that were not baptized by dipping, and that upon a profession of their faith, for they count all the rest unbaptized; and these can never join at the Lord's supper, with a minister or people that were only baptized in infancy by sprinkling, and think that sufficient.

Some are satisfied that there is no holy-day in the week but *saturday*, or the seventh, and they require public worship and the communion on that day; others think the first day of the week is alone holy, and they demand the celebration of the Lord's supper on that day constantly; nor can they leave all the common businesses of life to attend on the worship of *saturday*.



Now every man sees how impracticable it is to bring these different sorts of protestants to the settled communion of the same church. I confess I have represented their different sentiments in their extremes, and in the highest degrees of opposition; but it must be granted also, that several such sort of christians are to be found, whose weaker judgments and warm zeal, have carried these matters to the same extremes of opposition in which I have represented them; therefore my argument stands good, and such a promiscuous communion appears impossible.

Yet here I would lay down this caution; that though these sorts of protestants are necessarily excluded from mutual communion, it is not because either of them are unworthy of it, or because it is unlawful to communicate with each other, but merely because their different and contrary forms of worship render it impossible. Let them not therefore censure or judge one another, but so far as true piety appears, let them account each other good christians, and be ready to do all proper christian offices for, and toward each other; and let them wait till God shall convince either of them of their excessive rigour, and unreasonable strictness, in their particular opinions, and in the mean time let them be heartily willing to join with each other in such parts of worship in which they agree, where just occasions may require it.

Secondly, If the thing were possible, and such a mingled communion of all professing protestants could be practised, yet there are some cases wherein it would be unlawful, and ought not to be practised: For several persons may believe the bible to be the only and perfect rule of faith and duty, and yet may put such a sense upon it, as is either dishonourable, dangerous, or destructive of the christian faith; I have made this appear at large under the foregoing question; there I have shewn that there may be *antropomorphite* and *arian* protestants, *sabellian*, *socinian*, and *pelagian*; rational, and enthusiastic; literal, and allegorical; *calvinist*, *arminian*, and *antinomian*; there I have largely proved, that persons professing the bible, may deny the divinity and satisfaction of *Christ*, the real resurrection of *Christ*, the operations of the holy Spirit, the final resurrection of the body, and several other such important doctrines, by turning the expressions of scripture to a mere allegorical and figurative sense: Now as a certain author says, "If a man use the words of scripture, but impose a very different and new sense upon them, he may thereby as well bring in a new gospel, as if he used words of his own; and so he subjects himself justly to the anathema, or curse of the apostle. Gal. i. 8, 9. "As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." It is a very just and remarkable saying to this purpose of doctor Reynolds, in conference with Hart: "He who believes the words of *Christ*, in the sense of antichrist, and rejects the sense of *Christ*, and his Spirit, is not a christian, but is, in deed and truth, antichristian." Now with such sort of persons, christian communion ought not to be maintained, for they who deny the christian faith, can have no right to the special ordinances of *Christ*.

Thirdly, If such a promiscuous communion of all professing protestants were both possible and lawful, yet it is highly inexpedient. Now the apostle has determined it, that things which are utterly inexpedient, and such as hinder the edification of the church, should not be practised, 1 Cor. x. 23.

The great and evident inexpediency, and the many inconveniencies of such a community, will appear under the following heads.

SECTION II. Inconvenience I. What a most uncomfortable communion would christians have among brethren and sisters, in the same community of such wild and distant

distant principles, as those ten differences of christians I have reckoned up under the former question? Read over all their opinions again, and say, how utterly inexpedient is it that these should be united in one church! "What fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what concord has *Christ* with *Belial*, or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" 2 Cor. vi. 14—16. For he that disbelieves any necessary articles of the christian faith, we may rank him among the infidels.

Christian communion, in the pleasure and profit of it, consists very much in an union of hearts in constant public worship, in praying occasionally with one another, and conferring together about divine things: But what bonds of charity can unite their hearts, where one justly suspects the other's faith in points of greatest importance? How can they join with pleasure in hearing the same word of God, while their sense and meaning under those words is so extremely different, and contrary to each other, as light and darkness, as God and the creature, as heaven and earth? What pleasure in joining to address the same Saviour, while one believes him to be the true and eternal God, the other thinks him but a mere man? What harmony is there in their joys and praises, while one adores this redeemer for bearing the punishment of all his sins, and dying as a sacrifice in his stead; and the other, by the same expressions of adoration, only gives him thanks for confirming his doctrine of remission of sins by becoming a martyr for it? What delight can the members of the same church take in conversing with each other, who differ so widely even in things of experimental and practical godliness? While one is relating the power and freedom of divine grace in convincing him of sin, and shining into his heart to give him the saving knowledge of the gospel, in turning his mind from earth to heaven, and changing his whole soul, with all the powers of it, into a divine temper, in securing him from this and that temptation, and over-ruling his spirit to persevere in the paths of holiness; the other believes that divine grace and power has no hand in all this, but what is only providential, by external means and helps; and that this piety is really to be ascribed to the freedom of his own will; and perhaps a third person shall interpose, and say in *antinomian* language, "There is no need you should be so solicitous about these lesser matters of freedom from temptation, or the mortification of sin, either by divine grace, or by your own will; if you are but a believer in *Christ*, and your faith be strong, sin cannot do you hurt, and you shall certainly be saved." What wretched communion in prayer, or holy conference, must be maintained among fellow-members of the same church, whose opinions are so fearfully divided?

SECTION III. Inconvenience II. What an unhappy station must a minister have amongst such a people? How difficult to fulfil his ministrations of prayer and preaching without offence? Or rather how impossible? Surely the work of a preacher is to explain the scripture to his hearers; but he can hardly step out beyond the very express words of scripture, but he breaks in upon some of their darling sentiments: He can scarce comment upon any text, but he opposes the one side or the other of two contrary opinions, and grieves some of the flock: He can hardly speak of the person of *Christ Jesus* the mediator, but he offends the *arian*, the *samosatenian*, or *athanasian*: He can scarce express any thing about the redemption and atonement of *Christ*, but he awakens either the *calvinist*, or the *socinian*, to jealousy, and affronts their sacred doctrines: He must not ascribe glory to the Father, Son and Spirit, lest he displease



the *unitarians* in his assembly; nor must he neglect it, lest the *trinitarian* take umbrage. He dares not name the word perseverance, lest the *arminian* be angry; and if he should talk of falling from grace, the *calvinist* trembles, and half despairs.

And as preaching would be rendered almost impracticable, unless he confined himself only to mere moral duties, such as *Seneca* might preach; so all his ministrations in prayer and thanksgiving would be most unhappily perplexed and confined: He must not pray for forgiveness of sins, for the *antinomian* believer does not want it; nor for almighty sanctifying grace, for the *remonstrant* christian knows no need of it: He must not confess original sin, for the *pelagian* disowns himself guilty; nor dares he mention a word of the imputed righteousness of *Christ*, or justification by faith alone, lest half the assembly rise in arms against him: Nor must he venture to give thanks for the free electing love of God, lest two thirds of his church shew a murmuring dissent. Surely there is little left for this man to talk of in his pulpit, but what he may borrow from *Plato*, *Plutarch*, or *Epietetus*.

SECTION IV. To prevent this inconvenience, the patrons of this opinion assert, "That a minister ought not to impose any particular sense on any of the controverted scriptures in his preaching;" but all his business is freely and fairly to acquaint the people with those various senses of scripture, in which the different sects of christianity have contrived to explain it: He must represent the reasons impartially on both sides, and leave them to the judgment of the hearers, "without biasing of them, as one expresses it, by the needless declaration of his own opinion:" And they tell us, "it would be much more edifying to all christians, if ministers in their public discourses expressly asserted no other things than such as all, who read the scripture and receive it for the rule of their faith, acknowledge to be certain." To this I reply,

Reply I. What poor food would this be for hungry and thirsty souls to be treated with nothing else in a christian church, but the mere inculcation of moral duties, or the narration of christian controversies? What support could a weary and heavy laden sinner, bowed down and broken with a sense of guilt, obtain from such a discourse? Must a poor perishing creature, under the fears of the wrath of God, have no relief given it from a just and full explication of the sacrifice of *Christ*, because the *socinian* does not believe it? And must a weak christian, conflicting long with sins and temptations, have no encouragement from the doctrine of inward effectual grace, lest the *arminian* take offence at it? Is this that way of preaching that *Christ* has ordained to save guilty and impotent creatures, by a deep silence of the true and only relief, or a mere dubious proposal of it?

Reply II. Besides, how can a minister answer it to God, or his own conscience, if he sees errors in matters of importance growing amongst men, perhaps in his own church too, and does not attempt to prevent or refute them by his best interpretation of the word of God? Is he not "set for the defence and confirmation of the gospel," *Phil. i. 17.* Is he not bound to maintain "sound doctrine, and to teach no other," *1 Tim. i. 3.* Must not he "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints?" *Jude verse 3.* How narrow is the work of a gospel minister, and how much less useful is his labour or his office, if he be forbid this service to *Christ*, and the church?

There were some little points of controversy, in the apostles days, about the lawfulness of meats, &c. which if they were never determined, would not be destructive

structive to christianity; concerning these, the apostle at some seasons directs to "keep our faith, or opinion, to ourselves:" *Rom. xiv. 22.* Yet at other times he bids *Timothy* preach his own sense of them, and declare for christian liberty, and the free use of food. *1 Tim. iv. 6.* "If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of *Jesus Christ*," &c. Now can we think that *Timothy* should publicly give his sense in such circumstantial things, and yet not give it in the most important matters of the satisfaction and atonement of *Christ*, and the doctrines of the efficacious sanctifying grace of the Spirit? Read *2 Tim. ii. 14, 15, 18, 23, &c.* *Tit. i. 9, 10, 13.* and chapter *ii. 1, 2.* and judge if the apostle requires, or even indulges those young preachers to propose important doctrines in such a doubtful way, as may minister questions, and gender strifes; and in such an indifferent manner, as though it was no matter which opinion his hearers embraced: Surely this would be the way to keep men ever learning, and never coming to a settled knowledge of the truth.

Reply III. I might add in the third place, how can it be supposed, that every minister who has determined his own sentiments in these controverted points, should represent the different senses of scripture in just and impartial language, so as not to favour either side? Will not his own opinion give a warmth of delivery, or a brightness of expression, while he is representing the reasons of it? And will he not be tempted with a cold and languid faintness, to propose the arguments of those that differ from him? It is utterly as unreasonable to expect such an unbiassed indifferency in his explications of the important points in the word of God, as it is unrighteous to require it.

Reply IV. In the last place I reply, that such a practice as this would kindle contentions instead of quenching them: It would raise perpetual strife in the church, instead of composing it; and by relating the opinions and arguments on all sides, would furnish every warm temper with weapons offensive and defensive, to carry on the controversial war, and fight it out at home. This thought naturally leads me to mention the third inconvenience, of forming such a mixed and motley church.

SECTION V. Inconvenience III. This sort of communion would be much more likely to tear itself to pieces by perpetual jangles, disputes and quarrels, than to maintain peace and unity. Nor could this pretended bond of peace, an agreement in express words of scripture, secure it. Our Saviour has already given a fair decision of this matter, when he assures us, that "a house divided against itself can never stand," *Matth. xii. 25.* These persons that entertain so different opinions in religion, might agree well enough in the common affairs of life, if they were not joined in one church, and by that means brought constantly to worship together; but when they must hear continually the same sermons, attend the same prayers, and offer thanks to God together in the same words, with different meanings, it is not possible to secure them from awakening their jarring and contrary sentiments, whensoever any thing relating to those subjects is mentioned; and it is most likely too it will rouse their anger, their contempt and their uncharitable censures of those that differ from them in points of importance. Thus the proposed band of peace would become a firebrand of perpetual war, till it ended in divisions and desolation.

And this event may justly and reasonably be expected upon the election of every new officer in the church, as often as death, or removal of communion, or incapacity, &c. give occasion for a new choice. Will not each party be zealous to elect a person of their own sentiments? And the church by this means be crumbled into many parties, and divided amongst many candidates? Thus the passions of men will have a strong



strong temptation to exert themselves in wrath and reproaches; nor can any of them be persuaded to yield and drop their own candidates, which might be much more easily done, if the competitors were of the same opinion.

SECTION VI. Inconvenience IV. Such a principle or test of communion, might in some few years quite change the ministers and ministrations, the whole scheme and order of a church of *Christ*, from moderate *calvinist* or *lutheran*, to *antinomian*, *pelagian*, or *socinian*, from christian worshippers to antichristian idolaters, and from a temple of God to a synagogue of *Satan*; and according to this rule, the church has no power, nor right, to prevent it. Suppose a church of pious *lutherans*, or *calvinists*, consisting of thirty or forty members, whereof but eleven or twelve are men; if providentially six or seven of these die in a few years, and six or seven bold *antinomians*, or *socinians*, are admitted on the mere profession of scripture: They become the majority, and consequently the rulers of the whole church; they chuse pastors, and appoint ministrations and orders according to their own sense of scripture; what must all the twenty or thirty original members of the church do, that walked and worshipped many years together in holiness and comfort, according to the doctrine and practice of *Luther*, or *Calvin*? Must this lesser party of men, and perhaps almost all the women of the church, sit still under such preaching, and such ministrations, as an *antinomian*, or a *socinian* pastor would entertain them with, to their weekly public sorrow, and their mourning in secret every day? Or must they quietly depart from the communion of the church, and each of them seek their better edification in new churches where they could find it?

Perhaps also this church might be possessed of many temporal advantages, they might have a fair and well-built place of worship belonging to the community, with gifts or annuities for the support of the ministry and the poor; plate and finen, and other utensils for the celebration of holy ordinances given to the church: Must seven or eight professed *antinomians*, or *socinians*, by this means become the possessors of it? And the old members, while they seek their better edification, relinquish their first society and place of worship, and all these temporal possessions at once, which were given for the sacred uses of that *calvinist* or *lutheran* church? And yet they have their own poor to maintain still, who cannot find their edification in the *socinian*, or *antinomian* worship? Can that be a necessary rule of church-communion, which would thus injure the greatest part of the church, including the women, and rob them all of their spiritual profit, and their outward advantages at once?

The tables may be turned, and the same inconveniencies would arise to a *socinian*, or *antinomian* church, by admitting *calvinists*, or *lutherans*.

Now if such a sort of mixed communion be impracticable, unlawful, and highly inexpedient, as I think it is plainly proved beyond contradiction, the question must be determined on the negative side, and all sorts of protestants cannot be members of one particular church.

A very natural question arises here, "whether no christians must join in communion, but those that are in all things of the same opinion?" This shall be the subject of my next enquiry.

QUESTION

Q U E S T I O N XII.

*Whether no christians must join in the same communion, but those that are in all things of the same opinion?*

SECTION I. I HOPE there is nothing that I have said in the foregoing discourses can be interpreted into so narrow a sense, as to exclude all protestants from the same communion, but those whose sentiments are exactly alike. This would make all communion impracticable; for it will be hard to find two persons in the world, that in every point of religion have the same sentiments: Or if here and there half a dozen, or half a score christians were found that came very near to each other in opinion, these must every where set up distinct societies by themselves; thus the church of *Christ* would be crumbled into endless divisions. To this question therefore I answer in the first place,

Answer I. That as the affairs of the christian world are found in this imperfect state, it seems generally most adviseable for every person to join in constant and fixed communion with such a church, or be admitted members of such a particular christian society, whose public profession comes nearest to his own sentiments, where he can possibly have opportunity to do it; this would lay a foundation for the greatest union and peace among the members of the same church; considering the folly and weakness of human nature, and how much our differences of opinion endanger our charity, certainly this would be the easiest and surest method of answering the design of those apostolical directions and wishes. *Rom. xv. 5, 6.* "God grant you to be like minded, that ye may with one mind, and one mouth, glorify God," &c. *1 Cor. i. 10.* "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." And in order to shew their general and extensive charity, they may take proper opportunities for occasional communion with other churches that differ from them in matters of less importance; and they should be as ready to admit the members of such churches to the same privilege of occasional communion with themselves. Thus they might maintain the unity of the church of *Christ* in general, and preserve peace, both abroad and at home, without contention or schism.

SECTION II. But to declare my opinion particularly on this head; I would say, that there are two sorts of persons that ought never to communicate in the same sacraments; and there are three sorts of christians that need not join as members of the same church, yet may occasionally maintain communion with each other; and I think all other sorts of protestants may hold constant communion together.

The persons that should never attempt to join in the same communion, either constant or occasional, are these.

First, Those that differ in fundamental articles of doctrine or practice, or such articles, as either side supposes to be fundamental and necessary to salvation; for if they can never hope to meet together in heaven upon the principles they profess, I

see



see no reason why they should join in solemn acts of special communion on earth ; nor does the holy scripture require or encourage, but rather forbids it. " What communion hath light with darkness? Righteousness with unrighteousness? The temple of God with idols? And he that believeth with an infidel?" 2 Cor. vi. 14—16.

Secondly, Those that are so widely divided in their opinions about some practical points of worship or discipline, which are necessary to be practised in communicating together, but are utterly inconsistent with each other : Several such I have mentioned in the beginning of the former question ; as, those that think public liturgies or singing of psalms necessary, and those that think them utterly unlawful : Such as esteem episcopal ordination of absolute necessity, and such as believe it to be sinful and antichristian, &c. These cannot hold communion together in special worship, and hardly in the general ordinances of it.

The persons that should content themselves with occasional communion together, are chiefly such as these, viz.

First, Those that give evidence of serious piety, but differ in very important points of doctrine, which yet they cannot certainly call fundamental ; and especially such points as continually occur in preaching, praying, or other parts of worship, and would frequently disquiet and disturb the devotion of one party, or the other. Such I may suppose the better sort of *remonstrants*, or *arminians*, compared with the *calvinists*, and the better sort of enthusiasts, or *antinomians*.

Secondly, Those that differ much in the external forms of worship or discipline, which yet are not utterly inconsistent with each other ; but if fixed and united in one single community, they might probably occasion frequent disturbances ; such are the moderate episcopalians, and baptists, *lutherans* and *calvinists*, &c.

Those I call moderate, who are not so strict and rigid in their opinions, nor run into such extremes, nor place so great a necessity in their particular modes of worship or discipline, but being persons of serious piety and of extensive charity, they think it proper to omit or alter, on particular occasions, what may be offensive to either side ; or at least they allow either side their own particular practices and forms. These may very well unite in occasional communion, though they are fixed members of the churches of their own persuasion. A church that communicates kneeling, may allow communion to one that stands or sits : A church baptized in infancy, or in adult age, may allow communion to those that are of the contrary practice in baptism. A church that receives members upon a stricter profession of inward and experimental godliness, may allow communion to one that has been admitted a member of another church, where the profession of christianity is more large and general. A church that holds no bodily presence of *Christ* in the sacrament, may allow communion with one that believes consubstantiation, or that the body of *Christ* is present together with the bread, &c. Such occasional instances of communion might tend to enlarge the spirits of men into a good opinion of each other, and increase christian charity. But if the want of opportunity to join with christians of their own sentiments, should call or encourage them to unite as fixed members of the same community, they should agree to some sort of articles of peace, not to disturb the quiet of that church, by breaking in upon and overturning it's old and usual forms of ministration and government : For the peace of the church is more valuable

valuable than the amendment of some improper forms, where the life and power of godliness is preserved.

Thirdly, Those that differ in less points of christianity, but are of unsettled and unfociable principles or humours, and cannot content themselves without shifting from church to church, nor be easy with any that differ from them, without a zealous propagation of their own opinions, contrary to the rules that the apostle has given for the peace of the church, *Rom. xiv.* Some learned writers suppose these to be the heretics in the scripture sense. Surely these should be contented with occasional communion, and they should give satisfactory evidence of inward piety, before they are received to any communion at all.

Now if these three sorts are admitted occasionally to communicate in the special ordinances of *Christ*, this seems to me sufficient to answer the canons of the apostle, where we are bid "to receive such as *Christ* has received, and that without doubtful disputations." *Rom. xv. 7, 8.* and *Rom. xiv. 1.* Whereas if they should be admitted to a full and fixed membership, power and privilege in the same church, without any limitation by articles of peace, that would so much endanger the common edification and peace of the whole body, as to run counter to other canons of the same apostle; "Let all things be done to edification." *1 Cor. xiv. 26.* "Follow the things that make for peace." *Rom. xiv. 19.*

As for all other protestants, whose differences are of less moment, notwithstanding they may be very various, and almost infinite, yet if they are of a peaceful spirit, and give evidence of hearty and sincere piety, I think they may join, where they have opportunity, as complete and constant members of the same church, and worship the same God together, through the same Lord *Jesus Christ*, by the same Spirit, and fulfil all duties of christian fellowship, to his glory, and their mutual edification.

When any such sort of difficulties happen in relation to the communion of christians, which cannot be determined by the plain reason and nature of things, and "concerning which we have received no certain commandment from the Lord," the wisest man on earth can go no farther than to say with the apostle, "I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful; I suppose therefore that it is good for the present" case to act in this or that manner, *1 Cor. vii. 25, 26.* If such a modesty of language became that great man *St. Paul*, surely every lesser minister, or christian, would transgress the bounds of decency, to assume more to himself.

### SECTION III. An illustration on the three last questions.

What I have advanced on these subjects may receive some light perhaps, and may prevail more toward the conviction of my readers by an illustration of these cases, by a parallel instance taken from a society of philosophers: For when the same case is put in new subjects of another kind, it does not meet with the same predetermined judgment, as in subjects that have been long controverted.

Suppose several *Stoic* philosophers join in a society, and have weekly lectures read to them, by one or more professors whom they have chosen, and once a month hold a feast, wherein some peculiar ceremonies are performed to the honour of *Zeno*, the master and founder of their sect. Every person that is admitted to communicate in their feast, must profess himself a *Stoic* philosopher, a follower of *Zeno*, and to receive the precepts of *Zeno* for his principles of doctrine



and practice; and he ought to give satisfaction by conference to the members or professors of this *stoical* society, that he owns *Zeno's* precepts, and that in such a sense, as is sufficient, in their judgment, to make him a good *stoic*.

Now if any one shall mingle some of the doctrines of *Epicurus* therewith, or expound *Zeno* so as to make happiness consist in sensual pleasures, this overthrows the *stoical* doctrine, which makes happiness to consist in wisdom and virtue; and such an one cannot be admitted to any communion with them in their festivals, constant or occasional.

But if any person shall mingle much of *platonism*, or *pythagorean* philosophy with the *stoic*, and expound *Zeno*, in some part of his doctrine, in the sense of *Plato*, or *Pythagoras*, perhaps he may be invited and admitted as a guest at the *stoical* feast, and so hold occasional communion with them; because he is truly a *stoic*, though a favourer of other sects. His notions are not ruinous and destructive to the most valuable principles of *stoical* philosophy; though he differs so much, that it would endanger that particular *stoical* society, if this person were received as a stated member to all the powers and privileges thereof.

But as for others who hold the *stoical* doctrine, though one expounds it according to *Epietetus*, another believes it in the exposition of *Antoninus*, another in the exposition of *Seneca*, who were all *stoics*, these may all be admitted to constant communion, and as members of the same society; for the great ends and designs of their society are hereby promoted and secured; their several differences are but small, and very consistent with the cultivation of *stoicism*, and the benefits of the society.

In short, those who hold so little of *Zeno's* precepts, in the sense of the society, as neither to be consistent with it's being, nor well-being, must be excluded from all communion with it; such are *Epicurus* and *Democritus*, even though they should subscribe all the words of *Zeno*.

Those who hold no more of *Zeno's* precepts in the sense of the society, than is just consistent with the being of the society, but may naturally prove fatal and ruinous to the well-being of it, should be admitted only to occasional communion; such are those who admire *Plato* and *Pythagoras*, and mix their directions with the doctrine of *stoicism*.

Those who hold so much of *Zeno's* precepts in the sense of the *stoical* society, as to be consistent with the being, well-being, and edification of the society, may be admitted as fixed members thereof, and be intitled to all it's powers and privileges; such are the followers of *Epietetus*, *Seneca*, &c.

I hope such sort of parallel instances may give some light and direction in these affairs of communion among christians: Yet these things being not exactly delivered in the word of God, nor particular rules about them determined clearly in scripture, it is evident that our Lord *Jesus Christ* intended that the light of nature and reason, the common principles and rules of order and society, and the most prevailing prospect of holiness, truth and love, should determine our actions in such cases; still keeping close to every thing that he has revealed, so far as we can find his will in scripture; and in all other things making the best use of our christian prudence and charity, for the glory of God, and the good of men. 1 Cor. xiv. 40, 33. "Let all things be done decently, and in order, for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." 1 Cor. x. 31, 32, 33. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God!"

Give

Give none offence, neither to the *jews*, nor the gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."

Since it is impossible in this imperfect state, that any thing in civil or religious affairs should be free from imperfections, those methods must at all times be esteemed the best, that aim at the best ends, and are attended with the fewest inconveniencies. 1 Cor. x. 23. "All things that are lawful, are not expedient; all things that are lawful, edify not." Rom. xiv. 17, 18. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost. He that in these things serveth *Christ* with a humble sincerity of heart and design, is acceptable to God, and approved of men," even though he should not always hit upon the most prudent means.

But let peace and edification be ever in our eye, as our chief ends in church-affairs, according to that great canon of the apostle, *Rom. xiv. 19.* "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Amen.



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# DISCOURSE I.

## A pattern for a dissenting preacher.

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JOHN vii. 46.

*The officers answered, never man spake like this man.*

THE *jewish* church was grown very corrupt when our Lord *Jesus Christ* was sent into the world, as the reformer of his people, and the Saviour of mankind. The rulers of the church hated reformation, and would not suffer any thing to be altered in their establishment. Therefore their rage against our Saviour rose high, and the "pharisees and chief priests sent their officers to seize him," as you find in verse 32. to seize *Jesus*, the best preacher that ever spoke in the name of God to men: They sent men to silence him in the midst of his sermon, to summon and constrain him to appear before them. The chief priests were the highest ecclesiastical governors, and the pharisees were a set of men that applied themselves to the study of their law, and their worship, and separated themselves from the rest of the people, under a pretence of greater holiness. These *jewish* clergy, and *jewish* devotees, joined to send their servants upon this wicked errand to lay hold on *Christ* the Lord. The persons that were sent, are called officers in my text: Probably they might be some ecclesiastical officers that belonged to their courts, because we find that the priests had power over them, and they gave them commission for their work, though we are not acquainted with their particular title.

But when they came and heard the gracious words that proceeded from his mouth, his sublime doctrines of truth and mercy, and his kind invitations to thirsty sinners to receive living water, as you find in a few words before my text, they were astonished and struck silent, they were inwardly restrained from executing their impious commission; they returned to their masters without having done their work: And when they asked them the reason why they had not brought the preacher with them, they boldly replied, that their consciences withheld their hand from him, for "never man spake like this man."

To improve these words to our present advantage, we shall consider,

I. What

- I. What difference there was between our Lord's ministry, and the preaching of other men in that day.
- II. What different effects it had on those that heard him.
- III. Draw some inferences for our instruction, and some for our practice.

I. We shall consider " what difference there was between our Lord's ministry, and the preaching of other men in that day."

It is very likely these officers had been wont to hear the sermons of the scribes, and the doctrines of the *Jews* in their synagogues, where *Moses* and the prophets were read every sabbath, and generally expounded to the people; but there was something in the matter of these discourses of our Lord, something in the manner of speaking, but much more in the peculiar power attending the words, which made these officers conclude, they had never heard such a preacher in all their lives.

1. First then, there is something in the matter of his preaching different from what those ecclesiastical officers had been used to hear. Though both *Christ*, and the scribes and pharisees, all pretended to take the bible for their text, yet there was a great variety in the subjects which they enlarged upon, and the substance of their discourses. They expounded the same moral law which our Saviour did, but it was in so poor and trifling a sense, in so strange and unreasonable a manner, so far from the spiritual design and divine meaning of it, that our Lord found, when he came into the world, he had need to go over it all again with a better comment, lest the " blind should lead the blind, and both fall into the ditch."

They set forth their sense of it in so gross and carnal an exposition, as though all the commands forbid nothing else but the external actions of sin, and required nothing else but the outward performance of duty; whereas our Lord *Jesus Christ* makes it appear to them by convincing reasons, *Matth. v.* that he that breaks one of the commands of God but in thought, he is counted a breaker of the law in the sight of God, the infinite Spirit, before whom our thoughts and intentions of mind, and all the motions of our hearts, are esteemed as our actual performances.

They expounded away the law of God indeed, and they lost the beauty, the power, and the perfection of it by their comments. Our blessed *Jesus* came to restore it again. They made holiness to be a very little thing, and an easy matter; whereas our Lord shews, it is exceeding hard " to enter in at the strait gate, and there needs labour and pains to travel onwards in the narrow path " that leads to heaven.

Again, they dwelt much upon the ceremonial part of their religion, with too great a neglect of the moral part of it; but *Christ* insisted much upon the more substantial and weighty matters of the law, righteousness and truth, piety and love. The pharisees, who were devotees of their church, were careful to pay tithes of mint, anise and cummin, and doubtless their priests were not backward to preach it; but our Lord *Jesus Christ* makes it his more constant care, and his perpetual business, to establish them in the spirituality and perfection of the moral law of God, and touches very little upon ceremonies, for he thought the scribes and pharisees did that sufficiently of themselves.

Again, they insisted upon the traditions of the fathers, and councils, and inventions of men; *Christ*, upon the commandments and words of God. And when any point of doctrine, and especially when any point of practice was in dispute, their recourse was to the fathers; what do the traditions say, what say the ancients? But  
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our Lord *Jesus Christ* refers them still to some part of his Father's word, and quotes a text, either to prove a doctrine, or a duty.

Thus the teachers of the established church, in that day, instructed the people to build their hopes of heaven upon their natural birth, upon their relation to *Abraham*, and upon their passage through that original ceremony of circumcision, whereby they were initiated into the *jewish* church, and thought they were made sufficient members of it for eternal happiness. Our Lord *Jesus* taught them to build their hopes, rather upon regeneration, upon faith and repentance, upon the inward and mighty change of their souls, upon an alteration of their whole nature, and a turn of their hearts toward God, upon a humble confession of sins, and a dependence on the forgiving grace of God. In *Matth. iii.* we have a particular account what it was the pharisees taught them to build their hopes of heaven upon, viz. their being children of *Abraham*; and *John* the baptist, who was the forerunner of our Lord, cuts off that hold; he nullifies that foundation, and makes it vanish. "Think not to say within yourselves, we are children of *Abraham*, but bring forth fruits of repentance." verses 8, 9. And *Christ*, in *John iii. 3, 5.* shews, that "if a man be not born again," let him pretend never so much to a birth of the family of *Abraham*, and to his passage through the initial rite of circumcision, the ordinance of that day, it was in vain for him to hope to enter into the kingdom of God.

They preached up the doctrine of justification by their own works, for the pharisees trusted in themselves that they were righteous; *Luke viii. 9.* and in their opinion, whoever would follow the rules of the pharisees, must be righteous, as well as they, in the sight of God, and thus go to heaven upon the foundation of their own duties. But our Lord *Jesus Christ* continually shews men the imperfection of their own righteousness, and their utter insufficiency to perform any obedience, for which they might be accepted of God to eternal life. He preached the gospel of salvation by the mercy and forgiveness of God his Father, and gave hints of his own atonement for sin, and his mediation with God, as far as was proper in that day and time.

They taught the people implicit faith in their doctors, or teachers and governors, and that they ought to believe as the church believes, not allowing too nice an enquiry into all the particular grounds of it. This evidently appears by the reply that these officers received from the chief priests; for when they acknowledged that our Lord *Jesus* "spake as never man spake," the priests were ready to reprove them for giving too much credit to such a preacher as *Christ* was, "What! Do ye believe? Have any of the rulers, or of the pharisees, believed on him?" *John vii. 48, 49.* And will you dare hearken to a preacher, and doctrines, that the rulers and pharisees reject and renounce, and never gave you encouragement to depend upon?" So the man that was born blind, *John ix.* when he argued with them, that surely he must come from God, that could cure one that was born blind, and restore him to sight again? "Thou wert altogether born in sin, say they, and dost thou teach us?" verse 34. And they excommunicated him, or cast him out. But our Lord, when he preaches to the multitude, he bids them all "search the scriptures; these are they that testify of me," *John v. 39.* If I speak not according to the language of divine revelation, and the word of God, believe me not; I stand or fall by that test. Thus you see in numerous instances, notwithstanding our Saviour, and the scribes and pharisees, would all seem to take the bible for their text, yet how very different the matter or subject of their discourses were.

2. There was something in the manner of his preaching, that was different from the doctors of the *jewish* church, as well as in the matter of it. Whether the *Jews* affected

affected any pomp of oratory, or studied periods as the *greeks* did, is hard to say; but it is certain, that our Saviour used the plainest and most simple style, that every one could understand: Our Lord conveyed the doctrines of the gospel to men, in such a manner, as was most suitable to attain his sacred purposes. Sometimes he spoke in parables, but with this design to cover under them such mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, as were not fit to be divulged in their full brightness and light at that day.

Few of the *jewish* teachers preached from their hearts, when they preached pure and strict religion, for they practised very little of it. But our Lord never preached up any part of virtue or piety but what he practised. Nor when they insisted upon traditions and ceremonies, did they always perform them; for our Saviour complains, "they laid heavy burdens upon the people, which they would not touch with one of their fingers," *Matth.* xxiii. 4. But our Lord *Jesus Christ* preached with the greatest sincerity, for he believed what he taught, and practised what he required.

They preached in a cold, dull and insipid way, as they must do, because their hearts were not in their work. But our blessed Lord, had doubtless a solemn and awful air of unfeigned religion on his face, and piety and goodness sat on his countenance, while the words of truth and salvation were poured out from his lips. He taught the things of God to the people, as one that had zeal for God, and a tender and compassionate concern for the souls of men; his zeal appears sufficiently in the actions of his life, *John* ii. 17. "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up," it wasted his natural spirits. How warm was he in reproofing sin, even the sins of the rulers and priests of the church in that day! How kind and melting was his language, in inviting sinners to repent and return to God! How large his promises of pardon, in the name of God his Father, "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men!" *Matth.* xii. 31. How moving are his exhortations to faith and hope in himself! *Matth.* xi. 28. "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Come and take upon you my yoke and my burden, for my yoke is easy, and my burden light. Come and learn of me," practise what I preach, and imitate what I do.

The scribes taught by way of exposition, and poor expositors they were of divine revelation; and probably they never enforced holiness on the conscience with solemn and pathetic words; *Christ* spake with authority, as one that came from God, clothed with power. *Matth.* vii. 28. "The people were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught as one that had authority, and not as the scribes."

3. Not only in the matter and in the manner of *Christ's* preaching, there was some difference from that of the doctors of the age; but thirdly, there was more difference between his preaching and theirs, in the power that attended his sermons, for God was with him. But the *jewish* church was grown so degenerate, that though God himself did once establish it, yet now he had almost left and forsaken their priests and their teachers. There was an evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, that attended the words of *Christ* inwardly to the hearts and consciences of men. Therefore *Christ* could say concerning his preaching, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life," *John* vi. 63. The Spirit of God was given him without measure, as *John* the baptist confessed concerning him. *John* iii. 34. "The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, the Lord had anointed him to preach the glad tidings of salvation to men, to untie the captives, and to bind up those that were wounded and broken in heart," as in *Luke* iv. 18. which he himself cites from the prophecy of *Isaiah*, which was spoken of old concerning him. The Spirit of the Lord was upon him and went with his words, that made the officers acknowledge, "never man spake like him;" for they had been used before to a preaching without



without the Spirit, a preaching where the Spirit of God was hardly found: And when they came to a preacher with whom God was, no wonder they confessed something different between him and them. Now this power, this secret power, that attended the ministry of *Christ*, had various remarkable effects upon the hearers, which leads me to

II. The second general head proposed, that is, "what were the effects of the preaching of *Christ*, whereby it is further differenced from that of the *jewish* doctors." And in this part of my discourse I shall range all my thoughts under these three heads; the effect it had upon the multitude, the effect it had upon his own chosen ones; and the effect that it had upon his enemies.

1. Let us consider the effect that his preaching had on the multitude. It amazed them, it gave them uncommon surprise, *Matth.* vii. 28. "The people were astonished at his doctrine." They wondered, not only at his miracles whereby he confirmed his sermons, but at the sermons themselves. We have a very particular account of this in *Mark* vi. 2. "Many that heard were astonished, saying, whence hath this man these things?" It set many of them upon the enquiry, and upon a search of heart, what all this his doctrine might mean, and what they had of concern in it. They began to debate the case with themselves, whether he came from God, or no, and whether this was the *Christ*, or no. There was no such stir among the people while they attended upon the common sermons of the scribes, and the teachers of the *jewish* church. They came back as they went, they sat unconcerned and unmoved. They heard the oration and the performance, they seemed perhaps to be pleased with some of those that pronounced better than their neighbours, and they went away unimproved, unless in uncharitableness against the followers of *Christ*, the new preacher, and in zeal for ceremonies, some of which also God had not instituted: These were the improvements of the church of the *Jews*, that attended upon the common preachers of that day.

When a nation had been a long time buried in ignorance and darkness, and been kept under by the sovereignty and policy of priests, and there springs up a new teacher among them, with some characters of divinity about him, they are all awakened and set upon the enquiry; they see the difference between their own dull hypocritical teachers, and the new Spirit of piety and devotion. They never before troubled themselves about inward religion, but now there is a public open acknowledgement of something uncommon, and they are willing to consider, whether it be divine, or no. Such was the case of the *Jews* when our Saviour was sent among them; such was the time of the reformation of this nation from popery; and those that taught the gospel of *Christ* in that day, in opposition to the popish religion, were called new teachers, "as in bishop *Burnet's* history," their ministry was very different from that of the romish priests and friars, and people were set upon the enquiry, for God opened their eyes; their doctrine was according to the gospel, their form and manner of preaching was warm and zealous, practical and experimental, and the Spirit of God was with them.

↳ This is therefore the first effect of the ministry of *Christ*, and will be the natural effect upon the multitude, when a divine preacher, that is distinguished from the common indolent teachers of the times wherein he lives, shall be called of God to preach in his name to sinners for the salvation of men.

2. Let us consider the effect that the preaching of *Christ* had upon his own chosen ones. It wrought a mighty and wonderful change upon them. Some of them were great and grievous sinners, and they were converted into saints. Some of them loved the

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the world too well, but afterwards they loved God and *Christ* above all, and renounced this world, in the hope and pursuit of a better. *Mary Magdalene*, who is represented as a vile wretch, comes and sits weeping at the feet of *Jesus*, acknowledging her sins, she receives large forgiveness, and loves her Saviour much, *Luke* vii. 38, 47. Behold her now humble and mourning, in a quite different frame, form, and temper, than what before you might have beheld her among the crowds of lewd persons. *Zaccheus* the publican, behold he distributes his goods to the poor, and restores fourfold to those whom he had wronged by his former violence, he comes and waits as a disciple of *Jesus*, receives this new doctrine, and accepts the salvation, *Luke* xix. 8. There was a power that attended the preaching of *Christ*, whereby they were effectually persuaded to give up themselves to his conduct. *Matthew* forsakes the receipt of custom, where perhaps he got many an unjust penny, to follow our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and abandoned his gainful office. *Peter, Andrew, James, and John*, left their nets and fishing boats, and followed the Lord at his call. Those that were ignorant were made learned in the truths of God, in the law and gospel. The poor of the people received the gospel and divine grace, and sinners were converted, sanctified and saved. Sublime and saving truths were they taught by the Father, under the preaching of *Jesus* his Son. "For flesh and blood did not reveal these things to them, but my Father which is in heaven," says our Lord, *Matth.* xvi. 17. Now there were scarce any such instances at this time under the preaching of the *jewish* doctors, because the Lord seemed to have left them; and their hearers being trained up in a formal and customary round of ceremonies, which they took to be true religion, they went on in a blind hope of the favour of God, because they were *Abraham's* seed; but there were very few instances of conversion and regeneration under all their ministry.

3. Let us consider the effect that it had upon the enemies of *Christ*. It is evident that it convinced almost all of them inwardly, and many of them in their discourses with *Christ* were reduced to silence and shame; they had not one word to reply. They went away, not daring to ask him any more ensnaring questions, for their mouths were stopped, *Matth.* xxii. 46. The most impudent and the most learned of them fell together under his reproof, and the repetitions of the doctrines from his mouth they could not sustain.

Some of his enemies who heard his discourses had their tempers a little softened towards him; those that designed to apprehend him, and went with that design, were inwardly restrained from touching him. So the officers in my text. Others again rose into a violent rage and envy, that their corrupt doctrines and their evil deeds were brought to light, and exposed before the people, and they hated him with more rancour, and pursued him even to the death.

III. I proceed now in the last place to make some inferences for our instruction, and for our practice.

We will begin with lessons of instruction.

Lesson I. And the first is this, "that men may preach without commission from a national established church, and yet be owned of God." Such was the case of our Lord *Jesus Christ* in my text, and God discovered to the world how far he honoured him. *Christ* appeared like an upstart without a commission, for he was not sent forth from any of the schools of the prophets, or from under any of their public forms of teaching: Therefore they say concerning him, "as for this man we know not whence he is," *John* ix. 29. He was looked upon as a schismatic in those days, as a sort of separatist from the established church, and all those that followed him, were opposed



under that pretence. It was thought a sufficient refutation of his commission to preach; "Have any of the rulers, or of the pharisees believed on him?" *John* vii. 48. But God sent a divine testimony into the hearts of those that heard him, and made them cry out, "never man spake like this man." It is no matter whence he comes, says the man, who felt his power opening his eyes, it is no matter whether he has authority from you, or no; for his miracles and his doctrine give sufficient attestation to his character, and his divine authority. When *Peter* and *John*, after the death of their master proceeded to publish the same doctrine which *Christ* had done, how were they railed at, and how furiously persecuted by the rulers of the *jewish* church: But God was with them, and by their ministry he converted thousands. Look into *Acts* iv. 17, 18. and following. "Let us, say the rulers of the *Jews*, let us straitly charge and threaten these men, that they speak to no man henceforth in this name." There were *Ananias* and *Caiaphas*, *John* and *Alexander*, kindred of the high priest, with the rulers, elders and scribes, as you find in the fifth verse; and they summoned these new preachers to appear before them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of *Jesus*; but *Peter* and *John* answered and said, "whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken to you more than to God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." verses 19, 20. We that have had in our own souls a rich and divine experience of the power of these doctrines, and of this gospel, which we preach; we have such a divine testimony to the truth of them, that we cannot but publish them, whether you command or forbid us. God owned them with power, when they had the private house shaken, where they were assembled together verse 31. "They were all filled with the holy Ghost, and all spake the word of God with boldness." Let us not therefore suffer ourselves to be imposed upon and terrified with the frightful name of schism, for our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and his apostles, had the same reproach. What if we do not worship according to the prescribed forms of those that are in power, yet if we worship according to the rules established by our Lord *Jesus Christ*, we can vindicate our consciences to him, and our consciences will not charge us another day, nor will our Lord reprove us. We have the example of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and his followers, let us keep close to this pattern, and not be afraid.

Lesson II. We may learn from hence "the distinguishing power of the Spirit of God when it accompanies his own word," that it reaches the hearts of some with powerful convictions, while others remain obstinate. Some say, he deceives the people, and some would have laid hands upon him, as in the verses before my text, but these officers were so struck with his doctrine, that they could not do it. The grace of God that attends his own word is sovereign, and delights with glory to distinguish itself amongst the hearers: Sometimes servants are convinced and wrought upon with mighty efficacy, when masters shall remain ignorant, and stupid, or be provoked to wrath and enmity against the preacher. The rich may blaspheme, while the poor receive the gospel. The rulers say, that he was a deceiver, but the officers, their servants, were satisfied there was something divine in his doctrine, "for never man spake like him."

There are some, it may be, that go to the place of public worship, and hear sermons, in order to revile the doctrine and the religion, and perhaps with a spiteful intent to do some mischief to those that publish it; but *Christ* shall over-rule them to gain good by the sermon, and turn their curse into blessing. These officers came probably with wrath in their hearts, and with a design to revile *Jesus*, and lay hands on him, according to their orders; but they were constrained to turn away from him with

with innocent hands, and they fulfilled not their mischievous designs. There have been such examples in our days, when wicked men have come to blaspheme God and the gospel in his ministers, and to strike our Lord *Jesus Christ* through the sides of the pure professors of his faith and worship, and they go away believers; then is that glorious prophecy fulfilled. *Isai. lxxv. 1.* "I am found of them that sought me not." And blessed be God that such instances are found in our assemblies, wherein our Lord *Jesus Christ* makes his divine power appear, and attests his gospel, according to our ministrations of it.

Lesson III. I infer also from this text and discourse, that "when God resolves to work by his Spirit with his word, he breaks through all oppositions and prejudices of every kind, and constrains the hearers to confess, as well as believe." The divine conviction strikes like lightening through their hearts, and commands their lips to acknowledge the presence and power of God there.

Now I shall exemplify this head by considering the particular characters of these officers, and survey what difficulties, and what prejudices they laboured under, when they came first to put themselves under the preaching of *Christ*, and we shall find this inference eminently true.

They were educated under the *jewish* priests, and doubtless they had their heads full of notions concerning a glorious *Messiah*, and they wished for nothing more, than to bear some considerable office in the kingdom of that *Messiah*, if he should appear in their day; and this is not at all strange, if we reflect that this was the very mistake and the temptation of *James* and *John*, who were two apostles. But when they heard *Christ* preach, they must probably fall under convictions of a different kind, and be sensible his kingdom was spiritual: For he wrought powerfully upon their spirits, and seemed to give them another turn of mind, they confessed and acknowledged though he was mean in his appearance, and his character in the world was contemptible, though he carried nothing of greatness and magnificence with him, he might be the true *Messiah*, for they were sure "never any man spoke like him."

Again, they were supposed to be enemies in their hearts to *Christ* before they came; but when God and his grace was with them by the mouth of his Son, they felt their error, they were forced to acknowledge it, and they became his friends; and instead of delivering him up to the fury of their rulers, they screened him from their rage and violence, and let him go in peace.

They were under the dictates and authority of the high priest and pharisees, and yet how glorious was the power and victory of the gospel over their spirits! They dared to disobey their lords and masters in this unrighteous command, to let go the man whom they sent for as a hainous criminal. As they were under a direct command to seize the Lord, so they were in danger of severe reproaches, and being turned out of their places, and perhaps of excommunication too, if they did not fulfil their orders: But the power which came with the word of *Christ* gave them courage, and they told their masters, they dared not seize such a man, a man that preached at that rate, "so as never man preached."

Now when they not only had the obstacles and prejudices of their own irregular notions founded upon a long course of education, but were enemies to *Christ* in their hearts, and were under authority to lay hold of him, yet the power of God, in the mouth of his Son, brought them to confess there was something extraordinary in him, and to tell their rulers so too. All this gave a noble testimony to the mission of *Christ*.



Such sort of witness God was pleased frequently to give to the gospel of his Son, in the lips of his apostles, and his inspired preachers, in primitive times. Men who have come into their assemblies, ignorant of the gospel, and disbelievers of *Christ*, have been convinced and judged by the words which they heard, "the secrets of their heart have been manifested, they have fallen down and worshipped God, and confessed that God was in the midst of them of a truth," see 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. Some appearances of this kind have been also seen in our day, and among our fathers in their public labours; and perhaps as many mighty prejudices, and as great obstacles have been broken through by the almighty power of the word of God, in the lips of his ministers, who derive not their authority from the state. Such instances give a divine testimony to the words of the gospel which are published, though the preachers are not commissioned by the national establishment. If God gives us his seal in such a powerful manner as this is, we will believe our authority is from God, and not question our commission.

Lesson IV. I infer, that the "first work of God upon the consciences of natural and carnal men, is very surprising to them."

The officers seemed to be under astonishment, and cried out, "Never man spake like this man." Perhaps they were never under a sermon before, where the Spirit of God attended it, or where their consciences were in any measure awakened. And thus it is in our days, when persons are under the first conviction of sin and righteousness by the preaching of the word, they confess they never heard such words before.

Though the matter and the manner of *Christ's* preaching was very different from that of the scribes, yet I take the biggest reason of the exclamation of these officers, to be the attending power of the Spirit working upon their consciences. So poor sinners, that have long sat under a formal and cold ministry, and attended twenty years or more upon it, because they were afraid to change their preacher, afraid of some terrible names of frightful reproach, and afraid lest they should change their worship to the name of schism, when they have ventured to go astray into some private worshipping assembly, and have heard a discourse whereby they have been awakened to see their sin, and their danger, and the way of salvation by the righteousness and the grace of *Christ*, they are brought as it were into a new world, they are amazed at what they see and feel, they say within themselves, "Is this the gospel of *Christ*? Then I never knew the gospel till this day." Such persons, under the first powerful impressions of God on their hearts, are so surprised, that sometimes they hardly know, whether it is the voice of God, or man; like *Samuel*, when he was first called to be a prophet, knew not the voice of God. They are amazed like the woman of *Samaria*, when she met with our Saviour, *John* iv. 29. "Come see a man who told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the *Christ*?" Under such an amazement have stupid and ignorant creatures fallen, when they have been first awakened to see the state of their own souls, and the salvation of the gospel in a powerful and converting light, that they have wondered at the preacher, as though he were some extraordinary person, when perhaps his talents were not uncommon; but the Spirit of God was with him, and commanded divine light to shine into the darkness of their souls, and at this they have been surprised, and been ready to cry out, "Never man spake like this man."

But I shall insist no longer on these heads, but proceed to some inferences for our practice.

Inference I.

Inference I. First, I would draw an inference that concerns ministers who have not commission from a national church, "that they should see to it that they have a call and a commission from God, and imitate our Lord *Jesus Christ* in the discharge of it." It is not my business here, my text does not naturally lead me to it, to enquire into all the particulars that make up the call and commission of a gospel-minister; but it is the business of each of us, when we are well satisfied in our call to the ministry, to imitate this glorious preacher *Christ Jesus*. Let us set before us his example, who had received no orders from the *jewish* priesthood, especially when we are among a people, who think we are not called to preach, because we have no ordination from an established church.

In general we should avoid those things in our ministry, wherein we may have just reason to fear others have been mistaken, and for which God hath contended with them, or departed from them. Not that we should seek after something novel, and out of the way, on purpose to avoid their method, or reject any thing in the course of our ministry, merely because they teach or practise it; this would be highly irrational and improper. But when we find their matter of discourse, or their method of ministration hath been unblest of God, or unsuccessful for the good of men, we have reason to see and enquire, whether there is not a more proper way of preaching to attain the great ends of the ministry, even the glory of God, the honour of *Christ*, and his gospel, with the conversion and salvation of poor sinful souls. This was the practice of the Son of God when he became a preacher among men, and let him be our pattern.

If others therefore in the matter of their ministrations, insisting much on the moral law, have given too narrow explications of it, and have not informed the people of the spiritual perfection of it, let us preach it up in the perfect purity of it's demands, and in the severity of it's threatenings; let us imitate our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and publish this holy law in it's spirituality, and it's terrors to awaken, convince and persuade men. If others have insisted most upon the ceremonies of worship, and established forms, and endeavoured to bind down the consciences of men to their inventions, or to the traditions of their fathers, which God never approved of, let us insist upon the command of God alone, and upon those rites and forms of worship only which he hath instituted: If others have preached up the sufficiency of baptismal washing, instead of regeneration by the holy Spirit, and led their hearers to a false presumption that they are born of God, because they have been baptized, let us follow the doctrine of the blessed *Jesus*, who requires every man to be born again, to be born of the holy Spirit, as well as of water, and to be made a new creature in heart as well as in life, in order to enter into the kingdom of God. If we have found that others have been cold and indolent in their ministrations, and have been greatly defective in their zeal for God, if they have had too little concern for the souls of men, and too great an indifferency for the salvation of perishing sinners, let us double our zeal, let us be more earnest in labouring to save sinful creatures, and to bring saints nearer to God, and to build them up in faith and holiness. If we should have reason to fear the Spirit of God is much departed from others, let us cry with great earnestness, that the Spirit may never leave our assemblies, and abandon us to labour in vain without his influences. Let us long for the presence of that Spirit in our secret studies, as well as in our public ministrations of the gospel, which alone can make a *Paul*, or an *Apollos*, to plant and water with success.

And



And this may be a way, not only to do more service to God, and do more good to the souls of men, but this may be a means, in the providence of God, to secure us from the rage of men too.

Let us remember, that when the chief priests, and rulers, and pharisees, sent to apprehend our Lord *Jesus*, for preaching such doctrine as he did without their commission, the officers who were sent, were impressed in their consciences with sudden convictions under his sermon, and they would not seize him. And God may give such instances of deliverance as divine attestations to our preaching, if we keep close to the example of our Lord *Jesus*, and have much of his Spirit with us.

Inference II. The next practical inference, is addressed to those who attend such ministers as have no commission from the established church: If ye have found spiritual edification from our labours, you may be encouraged to proceed. Such were many of the people who attended on the sermons of *Christ*, in the days of his flesh. They were sufficiently vindicated in this their following after him, not merely by the miracles that he wrought to prove his divine commission, but by the convincing, converting and sanctifying influence which accompanied his preaching. Let this appear in your whole conversation, in order to vindicate our ministry, and your attendance.

Was it said, even by the officers of the ecclesiastical court, concerning him, "Never man spake like this man," let it be said by all the world concerning you, "never men lived better than you do." Let it be acknowledged in the eyes even of all those that hate you, that the lives of none of them are comparable to your lives for strict holiness and religion. And this will give a conviction to the hearts of men, and go a great way to justify your preachers, and your attention to their sermons. This justified the officers to their own consciences, in their neglect to seize *Christ* the Lord, though they could not learnedly make out his commission: Nor could they give, it may be, a very rational account of the preference of *Christ* to their national and established preachers, yet they could say; we have felt something in our hearts from this man's preaching, that we never felt from the preaching of other men, therefore we could not seize him, we durst not apprehend him, we believe he hath something divine in him.

It may be, many of you know not how to argue upon the reasons of your separation, or non-conformity, but if you feel such inward evidence in your hearts, and if the evidence witnesses also in the holiness of your lives, and runs through all your conversation, if you have felt in the sermons of those that are not commissioned, some divine influences that you never felt elsewhere, then you will say, these are the servants of the most high God; and without any particular reflexions upon the public church, or the public way of worship, you will have abundant reason to keep close to those teachers where you have felt conviction and sanctification under the word.

When it shall be enquired, what do you more than others, let there be a fair and glorious answer ever at hand, that is legible in your lives by all mankind; let the grace of God in your heart, and abounding virtue and piety in your lives speak for you, that you attend upon men who do not preach as others do, and that you are made to live such lives as others do not live. Let your christian government of yourselves in sobriety, in temperance, in abstinence from the lusts of the flesh, in mortification to this world, and deadness to the vanities of this life, plead for you and for your preachers. Let it appear you are taught better than others by your living better than the rest of men, in faithful, just, and merciful behaviour towards your neigh-

neighbours, in strict honour and honesty, in purity of life, in innocency and usefulness among your fellow-creatures. Let it appear that you bind yourselves to the rules of morality and piety, stronger than others do, even by the death of *Christ*, and the love of God in *Christ Jesus*, whose sacred name as a mediator, a ruler and a divine pattern, is ever dwelling on the lips of your preachers.

O never let it be said concerning you, that you are ready to cheat in your traffick, that you are apt to deal deceitfully in your merchandize, and you are prone to outwit others, and to undermine them in the management of your secular affairs. Never let it be charged upon any of you in your trades, that you skrew down the seller, and strain up the buyer, to extravagant and unreasonable prices for your covetous and exorbitant gain. But let all be open and generous, plain and simple, without fraud, and without extortion; such as may honour the gospel of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and give a character of honour too, to that ministry upon which you attend, since it has not national and established ordinations and honours. Let your carriage towards God in your secret worship, and your public attendance upon divine ordinances, be of a piece with your conversation in the world; let it be known by the heavenly and holy temper of your spirits; that you are the sons of God, that your hearts are renewed, your souls are changed from what they were by nature, and your lives are gloriously different from the lives of others, and thereby give honour to the gospel that is preached among you.

This will enable you to bear the reproaches of schism and separation from a national church; but how can you bear them, if you have not something that carries you above these reproaches? Can you be content to be as loose, as vain, as careless in your manners towards God, and towards your neighbour, as others are, and yet to give yourselves all the trouble of separation from them in worship, and bear the reproaches of this separation? This is not acting wisely, it will not quit cost; here you run a certain risque, and yet you lose all the profit you might hope for. If therefore you chuse to attend upon such a ministry as has not the public commission, let it be said concerning you, "no men live like these men;" that even those that avoid and fly from your assemblies, and who never have heard your ministers, may yet be able to infer from your lives, that "other men speak not as these men speak." Amen.



## DISCOURSE II.

A sermon preached at the separation of two  
deacons to their office.

I TIM. iii. 13.

*For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

**A**S there is a divine order in the invisible church, and the whole management of that large spiritual family is conducted by rules of divine wisdom, so the Lord hath appointed a beautiful order in his visible church; and in his book he hath given us the pattern of his house, and the manner of the officers and ordinances thereof; at least the biggest lines of it are drawn fair and plain, though some of the lesser circumstances may be more obscurely expressed. By a due study of the scriptures, and the exercise of our common reason, we may find a rule to guide us, in the most considerable and necessary affairs that belong to the constitution and regulation of the house of God.

Christ himself, the Son of God, dwelling in flesh is the head, the chief shepherd and overseer of all his visible church upon earth; for he wears a visible body, though for a season he be departed from our sight, and dwells in heaven; thither he ascended to "receive the promise of the Spirit, and to bestow gifts upon men," *Acts* ii. 23. and *Eph.* iv. 8, 11. By these gifts he furnished persons, and fitted them to sustain offices of an ordinary or an extraordinary character.

The extraordinary officers were apostles and prophets, and some suppose evangelists also, these were to continue only for a season; the ordinary are pastors and teachers, elders and deacons, which are to continue through all ages of the church.

To omit all the disputes that have been raised how far pastors, teachers, elders and bishops or overseers differ from one another, I shall at present consider all the ordinary church officers, as included under these two names, bishops and deacons. For thus the apostle seems to include them, *Phil.* i. 1. The visible church of Christ on earth is composed of spirits dwelling in flesh, and as the bishops or overseers chiefly exercise their care toward the soul or spiritual part, so the chief care of the  
deacons

deacons seems to relate to the body, and things belonging to it: And as there are some special persons in the church, to whose outward welfare the care of the deacon must be extended, so the whole church, considered as a society meeting together for worship, will need some conveniencies for the outward performance of that worship, which seems to be another part of the deacon's business. But I proceed to pursue my discourse according to the text, whereby this will appear with more evidence.

There are these three things contained in the words.

I. The office itself.

II. The due discharge, or performance of it, and

III. The encouragement, or reward.

I. First, the office itself. Under which we shall consider four things, viz. The business of it; the reason of its institution; the duration of it; and the ordinary method of investing a person with it.

i. The business of a deacon is expressed very briefly in *Acts* vi. 2. "To serve tables," or to manage affairs that relate to the provision for the table of the poor, to which are added in the general construction of the words, the table of the ministers, and the table of the church at the Lord's supper.

The poor oftentimes make a considerable part in christian churches. In the beginning the poor received the gospel. And thus it is still, "not many rich, not many noble are called, but God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom." *1 Cor.* i. 26, 28. and *James* ii. 5. Now as it is the duty of the rest of the church, and especially of the rich, to communicate toward the supply of the wants of their poor brethren, so it is the proper business of the deacons to receive and to distribute these supplies; and no doubt but it is their duty to excite and exhort those whom they see negligent, and to urge them to the performance of these works of love and piety.

The table, or outward support of the ministers, ought to be provided by the church also. *1 Cor.* ix. from the 4. to the 14. verse. "The Lord hath ordained, that they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel." And it seems very convenient, that one or more persons should be deputed to see this performed, that so the ministers may not be too much exposed to a solicitude about outward things, nor their cares too much laid out upon the necessities of the life of their bodies, while they should rather be devoted, or entirely given up to the word of God and prayer, for the service of souls.

Besides, if the ministers of the church were forced to expect and receive the several portions of their maintenance from the several persons of the church, their own collection of it would take up too much of their time, would expose them to the censure of covetousness and greediness, would too much impose upon their modesty, or would make their maintenance fall short.

And I might add also their subsistence, which is but an act of justice due from the church, would look too much like mere charity, and appear too precarious and dependent; and their obligations to particular private persons, would too much expose them to the temptation of partiality, in the exercises of their ministrations, and in their pastoral care. Whereas this is forbidden to ministers, *1 Tim.* v. 21. "Do nothing by partiality." We might be more afraid to reprove some that were rich and kind, and more negligent in comforting and instructing others that were poor, and could give but little. But when the minister receives his support from the church



in general, by the hand of the deacons, as officers of the church, then he is much more secured from these temptations. And no doubt it is the duty of the deacons to see to it, that each member of the church perform their part toward the support of the ministry; for it hardly seems decent for the minister himself to urge this duty on the people\*.

The table of the church at the Lord's supper, is maintained by the contributions of the church. The bread and wine must be bought at the public expence, but particularly provided for by the deacons, who in short are stewards of all the temporal affairs that relate to the church, even as the bishops and elders are of the spiritual; and both under our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who is the great pastor of pastors, and churches, and the feeder of his own poor, and provides all things for all.

I might add to these, that the business of a deacon seems also to extend to some care of the place of public worship, and all the necessaries that belong to the outward service of the Lord, such as tables, seats, vessels for bread and wine, and for water in baptism, &c. For though these things are not particularly expressed among the businesses of a deacon, yet they will never be performed, unless some one or more persons be deputed for this service; and who can be more proper persons than those, who by divine institution are intrusted with the contributions of the church. Yet in most of these affairs it is necessary to advise with the pastor, and with the whole church, and in every important matter to take their direction; for the deacons are but stewards, and not proprietors or possessors of the church's treasure, nor are they lords of the temporal things relating to the church.

ii. The reason of their institution, which is to assist the ministers or elders of the church in the care of all those things, which if devolved entirely upon the elders, would hinder them from their proper business, viz. "the word and prayer." The apostles, who were the elders and rulers of the church at *Jerusalem* at that season, managed the affairs of collection and distribution at first. *Acts* iv. 35. "The disciples brought the money and laid it down at the apostles feet, and there was a distribution to every one according to their need." But, *Acts* vi. 1, 2. "When the disciples were multiplied," the elders could not take care of all the poor; therefore the order of deacons was instituted in the next verse; and we find in *Acts* xi. 30. That the elders, or ministers, were not utterly divested of all power or care of the contributions, for *Paul* and *Barnabas* themselves received the contributions of the church at *Antioch*, to be disposed of to the poor saints in *Judea*: And *Acts* xii. 25. "*Barnabas* and *Saul* are said to return from *Jerusalem*, having fulfilled this service, τὴν διακονίαν, this work of a deacon," as it is in the original. So that as the ruling elders probably are helps in government, as the teachers are helps in doctrine and catechising, so the deacons are helps to the pastor in the management of all the outward and temporal affairs that relate to the church's welfare. Now if these things are so, the following consequences will arise.

1. That in churches which are very small, there is no absolute necessity of such officers, as ruling elders or deacons? for the pastor may perform all the services necessary in that church, with some very little assistance from the brethren, at such special occasions, wherein his own modesty may excuse him, or his other labours prevent him. It is plain the deacons were not chosen, till disciples were multiplied.

2. As

\* There is a very good discourse on this subject, viz. "the maintenance of a christian ministry," published by Mr. David Rees.

2. As pastors and ruling elders are not utterly divested of the care of the poor by the institution of deacons, so the deacons ought not to determine any thing of considerable importance, without consulting the elders, as I have hinted before; nor in affairs of this kind of the biggest moment, ought any thing to be determined by elders and deacons, without the cognizance and approbation of the church, for in these temporal things we are all but stewards of what the church intrusts us with.

3. Hence perhaps we may borrow another argument for the extent of the deacon's care, that is, that it reaches to all those things of a temporal nature, wherein the brethren of the church may help the elders; for this is the very design of the deacon's office, lest the elders, or ministers of the church, might be too much interrupted in their continual attendance on the word and prayer; and especially where there are no ruling elders chosen to assist the pastor or teacher, in managing church affairs, the care of the deacons seems still to be more extensive for the help of the pastor. And perhaps the word helps, *1 Cor. xii. 28.* may have some reference to these offices of ruling elders and deacons.

iii. The duration of this office. Doubtless it was designed to continue throughout all ages of the church, which appears from these two reasons:

Reason I. The objects of their care always continue. "The poor ye have always with you." *John xii. 8.* And ye shall always have them to exercise your charity and compassion. *Deut. xv. 11.* And in large churches the temporal affairs thereof will be too heavy a burden for the ministers to sustain, and therefore they will need the assistance of deacons. Besides, the provision for their own support, and for the table of the Lord, will be always necessary, while we minister before the Lord in garments of flesh, and while the table of Lord must be furnished with bread and wine, and other necessaries, in order to participate thereof.

Reason II. They are mentioned by the apostle *Paul*, as stated officers of the churches, and directions given concerning their character, their behaviour and management, as there is concerning other standing officers and affairs of a church.

It may be added also, that if they were thought necessary to the primitive churches, in the age of miracles, and the age of love, when God took special care of his ministers, and excited all the members of a church, to a mutual care of one another, and of the poor, much more necessary are these officers in all the following ages, when ministers must acquire and improve their gifts by hard study, and cannot maintain themselves by the work of their hands, and when the charity and mutual care of church members waxes cold, and need some persons to be appointed for this very business.

iv. The way of their constitution, or how persons are to be invested with this office; which seems to be performed by these five things.

1. By enquiring amongst the members of the church, who come nearest to the characters that are given of a deacon, *Acts vi. 3.* "Men of honest report, full of the Spirit, and of wisdom." *1 Tim. iii. 8.* "Grave, not double-tongued, not given to wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." Unto these I might add, that prudence will direct us to chuse such persons who are not very poor, lest the stewardship of the churches money should be a temptation to them. Not mean or despised in the church, lest they want due courage and sufficient influence upon their brethren for the management of their office. And they should be persons capable of admonishing the rich, and of comforting the poor, even as their business is to converse with both, to receive from the one, and distribute to the other.



They should also be persons whose temper is compassionate, and who have as it were a natural care for the good of the church, and such as have some leisure hours, and who are not so overwhelmed with the cares and constant business of this life, but they may now and then devote their thoughts, and their hours, to the service of the church of *Christ*.

2. They must be proved before they are fixed in this office, *1 Tim.* iii. 10. I do not conceive this to intend their management of the deacon's office, by way of experiment for a year or two; but rather a farther character of the persons chosen. Let them be such as are of some considerable standing in christianity, whose character and conversation has been proved and found blameless, and fit for such an office. It seems to signify the same with that character of a bishop, verse 6. "That he must not be a novice," that is, not one that is lately converted, or lately received into the christian church.

3. They must be chosen by the church, *Acts* vi. 3. "Brethren, look ye out among you seven men," &c. The pastors, or elders, must not chuse them without the church, for the apostles themselves, who were inspired, would not determine the persons, but left the church to chuse them, to shew us the stated method of chusing ordinary officers in a church.

4. They must accept of the call of the church, and that freely, and they must solemnly devote themselves to the service of *Christ* and the church. For all the subjects and servants of *Christ* in his visible kingdom must be voluntary, and the office of a deacon must be undertaken "willingly, and not by constraint," even as the office of a bishop, *1 Pet.* v. 2.

5. They must be devoted and separated to this work by the solemn prayers of the church, and seeking the divine benediction upon them in the discharge of their office. So were *Paul* and *Barnabas* separated to the work of the ministry amongst the gentiles, *Acts* xiii. 2, 3. And so the deacons to their office. *Acts* vi. 6.

Here note, that the elder, or elders of the church, ministers and teachers, are to be the chief agents in this affair. So you find the apostles and teachers were the chief agents in the two texts just cited: And as ministers may pronounce a benediction, or blessing in the name of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, so perhaps here it may be proper for the minister to pronounce them blessed, if they faithfully perform this office, as well as to pray for a divine blessing upon them.

The great dispute and enquiry, whether imposition of the hands of elders in this benediction, is now necessary, as in the primitive times, may be thus resolved: In many scriptures, where imposition of hands is mentioned, there were extraordinary and miraculous gifts conferred: You find this in *Stephen* and *Philip*, two of the first deacons, and you frequently find the holy Ghost conferred on men by this ceremony, *Acts* viii. 17, 18. and chapter ix. 17 — 19. Nor can I find one plain and certain instance of hands imposed in the primitive churches, where we are sure it was but an ordinary separation to an office without any extraordinary gifts conferred, or an inspired and effectual benediction given by an inspired person. Therefore I cannot conceive it necessary to be now practised; for if it had been necessary, surely there would have been some more certain direction and command for it.

But since there is so much colour given to it by some examples or expressions in scripture, where we cannot certainly prove that extraordinary gifts were conferred, we leave every church, and every elder, to their own liberty, of opinion and practice; and those that will impose hands in such a way of benediction, upon any chosen

sen officers in a church, shall never be censured by me, nor dare I pronounce it idle or unlawful. Yet still I think, if there be any elder or elders, in that particular congregation to which they belong, these are the most proper persons to perform such a ceremony.

I would add here, that as there were many sorts of consecration of old in *jewish* times, by washings, sprinklings, water, fire, &c. In the new testament things are said to "be sanctified by the word and prayer," 1 *Tim.* iv. 5. And therefore some useful instructions and exhortations from the word of God, seem very proper at the consecration of a bishop, or of a deacon, as well as prayer.

Let us proceed to the

II. Second thing expressed in the text; that is, to shew how the persons ordained may attain to a good performance of this office, of a deacon. Then a man uses the office of a deacon well, when,

1. He does it with sincere design for the honour of God, and zeal for the good of the church. This single eye, this sincere aim, ought to attend every action of a christian, and especially every part of the practice of a church officer, whose business has a more direct design of this end, and should have a more immediate and manifest tendency toward it. Simplicity and godly sincerity should run through the whole course of services in a church, without fleshly wisdom and carnal interests.

2. With diligence and care: When *Artaxerxes* the king gave command to the treasurers of his state, which are much the same as deacons in a church, to assist *Ezra* the priest in building the temple, he charges them, "Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven," *Ezra* vii. 23. Let this be a reproof to each of us, when we are negligent about any thing in the church of God.

Deacons should not only supply those wants that are made known to them, but be careful in enquiring into the necessities of the church, whether such persons may not want relief, who are too modest to burden the church, or ask support of the public. Whether *Onesiphorus* was a deacon or no, is not certain, but he fulfilled the office of a deacon, *διακονος*, both in *Ephesus* and at *Rome*, when "he sought out *Paul* diligently, and often refreshed him, and ministered unto him in many things," 2 *Tim.* i. 16—18.

The number of deacons is not determined in scripture, but so many ought to be chosen, whose due diligence, according to their circumstances, may answer the necessities of the church, without being overburdened themselves.

3. The office of a deacon must be performed with prudence and discretion: Distinguishing who are poor indeed from those who are covetous and pretendedly poor; "that the church be not charged more than is necessary," 1 *Tim.* v. 16.

4. With faithfulness to the church and to the poor, and to the ministry: For in all cases "it is required of stewards that they be faithful," 1 *Cor.* iv. 2. Distributing the contributions for the several services of the church, according to the design for which it is given by the church, is their duty.

5. Without partiality. Not neglecting any part of their office, or the service of any of the tables to which they are called, but laying by all carnal respect, 1 *Tim.* v.

21. Distributing to the poor, according to the degree of their poverties and necessities, whether these be constant or occasional: And this must be done with an impartial



partial view, without preferring one before another, upon any selfish or carnal considerations.

6. With chearfulness, and not grudgingly, *Rom. xii. 8.* "He that sheweth mercy, let him do it with chearfulness, he that ruleth with diligence;" which words seem to be spoken concerning the deacons and elders of a church. They ought not to be lavish of the church's money, nor ought they to be fond of saving, and too thrifty, lest the poor be grieved, and the church dishonoured by the hardships which any of their members suffer.

7. With gentleness and compassion. Treating the poor kindly, in imitation of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who condescended to the meanest, and pitied the poor: His servants they are, his deacons, and he expects they should take tender care of his members, not using them roughly, nor speaking hard things to them, lest their spirits be broken.

8. I cannot but think that occasional instructions, admonitions, consolations and prayers, with, and for the poor, ought to accompany the performance of a deacon's office; for these things are in some measure the duty of every christian, as it is frequently intimated by *St. Paul*; and much more surely of those who bear an office in the church, and who are called to a more particular acquaintance with the state of it, and converse with the members of it; and especially when it is a piece of their character, that "they must hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience;" that is, they must be men of a good acquaintance with the great truths of the gospel, and of an unblemished character for sincerity and piety.

It is certain, that as they are intrusted with the temporalities of the church, and know when there are any deficiencies with regard to the table of the minister, or the poor, it is their duty to admonish the members, and especially the rich among them to do their part toward the supply of their wants.

It may be observed, that the first deacons had extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, and were eminently furnished for such work, as exhortation and prayer. *Philip* and *Stephen*, who were two of the first seven deacons of the church at *Jerusalem*, were preachers of the gospel. Compare *Acts vi. 5.* with verses 9, 10. and *Acts viii. 5.* And in the account which *St. Paul* gives us of deacons in my text, all of them have such an honourable encouragement of arriving at higher degrees in the church, as gives us reason to suppose they were sometimes employed in some ministerial services relating to the spiritual state of the poor, as well as their temporal necessities.

And yet it must be still granted, that the original design of the institution of deacons, was to assist the pastors in the ministration to the necessities of the poor, and distribution of the moneys which were collected for this purpose, and not to preach the gospel publicly, though the first deacons having extraordinary gifts, were often so employed.

III. The third thing, in the text, is the encouragement given to the due performance of a deacon's office. It is said by the apostle, "they purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in *Christ Jesus*."

"The late reverend and learned doctor *Owen* believes this καλὸν βαθμὸν, or good degree and confidence in the faith, to signify no more, but a place or seat of some eminency in the church assemblies, which is due unto such deacons, where with boldness and confidence they may assist in the management of those affairs of the church which belong unto the profession of the faith which is in *Christ Jesus*;"

but

but he adds, "If any shall rather think, that both of these expressions do signify an increase in gifts and grace, which is a certain consequence of men's faithful discharge of their office in the church wherein many deacons of old were eminent unto martyrdom, I shall not contend against it." Others think that *καλὸν βαθμῶς*, or good degree, signifies the office of the presbytery, which they obtain by a due performance of the office of a deacon.

If I might give my conjecture, I would explain it these two ways.

1. They obtain a good degree of honour and respect from the elders, for the assistance which they give them in church affairs; from the poor, for their compassion and tenderness toward them, and supply of their wants; and from the whole church, for their fidelity, wisdom and diligence in the management of all the temporal affairs that relate to the church, for the honour of the gospel, and conveniency of the members.

2. By conversing much with the elders of the church, by acting in concert with them, by visiting the poor, and performing private christian services towards them such as exhortation, consolation, and prayer, and by a constant acquaintance and observation of church affairs, they acquire greater knowledge, they improve their gifts and their graces, they grow bold to speak of the faith of *Christ* more publicly, and have taken a good degree, or a good step, towards the office of a ruling, or a teaching elder, in the church.

And this is a very proper expression concerning those times, when christian churches were the only schools for the education of ministers; and the exercise of gifts, in and for the service of the church, was one chief means of their preparation for it. I confess in our day, since we have many outward advantages for the education of ministers in learning, and their improvement in knowledge, and in all gifts, it is not so usual, nor so necessary, that a deacon should grow up into an elder, or bishop. Yet in some churches, such persons have been found in late years, who have been deservedly called to the office of the ministry, by the great improvement of their gifts in the church, their uncommon degree of knowledge and grace, and the peculiar blessing of God.

After all, this is certain, that those that grow old in such an office, well performed, grow honourable in the sight of God and man; for "God is not unrighteous, my friends, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name; in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister, and we desire that every one of you would shew the same diligence unto the end," *Heb. vi.*

10—12.

## I N F E R E N C E S.

I. We may see something of the beauty of gospel-order, in the several offices of a church of *Christ*; but I shall now remark it only in these two respects, 1. That as the visible church here on earth, and the members of it, have many bodily necessities and conveniencies to be supplied, as well as their souls to be instructed and edified; so there are distinct persons of divine appointment commissioned to manage these affairs, and fulfil these services, viz. pastors and deacons. 2. Another part of the beauty of that order consists herein, that the one is to act in subordination to the other; the deacons are chosen for the assistance of the elders, and thus acting together by a sweet concurrence, the church is preserved in peace, the necessities of it are supplied, and the gospel honoured.

II. See



II. See here the tenderness of *Christ*, the great head of the church towards his ministers, and his poor: He has instituted officers to take care of their outward subsistence, as well as required the church to contribute for that end. Hereby the poor will not be left to perish, nor ought they to be exposed to extreme hardships, if the church can prevent it: Hereby ministers are secured from a too great solicitude about their own maintenance, and from interruptions in their more proper work, as well as from the malicious censures of the world, which would fall upon them, if they were overburdened with secular cares and concerns, either for the church, for the poor, or for themselves.

III. Learn from my text, that the services which are done for *Christ* and the church, have their rewards annexed to them for their encouragement in this world, besides the infinite recompence of reward in the world to come. Faithful deacons in a church, obtain a good degree of honour and esteem.

IV. From the deacons of a particular visible church, we may raise our thoughts unto our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who is the great minister, and bishop of souls; and I may call him too, the great and universal deacon of God the Father in the church invisible. The Father has given into his hand the riches of his grace, the treasures of his love, divine food and spiritual clothing, mansions of glory and inheritances in light; to be distributed amongst his poor saints, that they may be nourished and brought through this wilderness, and that they may be enriched with grace, be brought home to heaven, and be for ever blessed. He is diligent and faithful, he is wise, and gentle, and compassionate, and answers all the characters of a deacon in the highest degree. He spreads a table for starving sinners, and furnishes it with his own flesh and blood; he feeds us with the bread of life, and with living water, that we may eat, and drink, and live for ever.

And in this sense, when the deacons are serving tables, and supplying the wants of the poor, and the church visible, out of what is trusted with them; let them remember and rejoice, that they represent the character of our Lord *Jesus*, as he is intrusted with all supplies from the hands of the Father, and distributing unto the church invisible. To him let the eyes of your faith be lifted for wisdom, for gifts and grace, to manage the affairs with which you are intrusted, and he shall fulfil the promises of a large reward. Amen.

DIS-

# DISCOURSE III.

## Invitations to church-fellowship.

### PSALM lxy. 4.

*Blessed is the man whom thou chusest and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.*

**T**HE latter words of the verse shall be the subject of our present meditations, wherein we shall consider what is meant by "dwelling in the courts of God, and what is the goodness of his house wherewith his favourites shall be satisfied." There are three senses of this sacred phrase, "dwelling in the courts of God;" and the persons who are favoured to inhabit the sanctuary in either of these senses, may have the blessing of the *Psalmist* pronounced upon them.

The first, and the most obvious meaning of the words, "dwelling in the courts of God," is, "a continual attendance on him in the ministrations of his temple, and the discharge of some holy office there." This was the felicity of several of the priests and the *levites* of old under the *jewish* dispensation: And this is the happiness of the ministers of the gospel now, who are continually employed in the things of God, and the affairs of religion; who give themselves up, as the apostles did, "to the ministry of the word and prayer," *Acts* vi. 4. Whose business it is to "attend to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine," to meditate on God and *Christ* and salvation, to converse with the glorious invisibles of the upper world, and "give themselves wholly to them," as the apostle charges *Timothy* the young evangelist, *1 Tim.* iv. 13, 15. Blessed is the man whom God chuses for a christian and a minister, whose general calling, in common with the rest of christians, is to save his own soul, and whose particular employment as a minister is to save the souls of others. This order of men are utterly unworthy of their privilege, if they do not prize it highly, set a just value upon it, and confess their own happiness.

But I have shewn elsewhere\*, that this sense of the words, which is limited to priests and *levites*, could never include the whole meaning of *David*; for then he

\* See volume the first, page 122.



had excluded himself from this blessedness, who was not of the tribe of *Levi*, nor capable of priesthood; and yet he declares with holy joy, that he "would dwell in the house of the Lord for ever," *Psal.* xxiii. 6.

The second sense of the words therefore, and which seems to be the very design of the *Psalmist* is this: Blessed are they "whose habitation is near to the ark of God, and the tabernacle," and thereby "they are made capable of frequenting the house of God, and of waiting upon him with great constancy in the holy ordinances of his worship." These are the persons whom my text pronounces happy: There was but one tabernacle, and one ark in the days of *David*, and but one temple in succeeding ages appointed for all the inhabitants of the land of *Canaan*; but one place where God had recorded his name, and appointed the public sacrifices, and peculiar solemnities of worship, on which all the men of *Israel*, who lived at the farthest distance, were obliged to attend three times a year: But those whose habitation was near the place where the ark resided, and these solemnities were performed, had more frequent opportunities of such attendance.

The doctrine, which we may derive from this sense of the words, may be thus expressed. — "Happy are those persons whose circumstances and stations of life, are appointed by providence in so favourable a manner, as to give them liberty to come up constantly to the house of God, and wait upon him in all his institutions:" And the instances of their happiness are evident enough. For

Instance I. "These are nearer to the visits of God, and may see him oftener than others." These may have such a frequent sight of his "power and glory, as they are to be seen in the sanctuary," *Psal.* lxiii. 2. It is a pleasure to be near our best friend, to be near our dearest Father, to be near our own God. When we have a relation dwells near us, how often we are present with them! And they that dwell near the court, have opportunity of seeing the king upon every occasion.

Instance II. "These have more external helps towards heaven, than others have." It is true, we have a glorious mercy in this respect, that the scriptures are every where in our hands, and many labours of holy men in writing, who being dead, yet speak; but the ministry of the word in the house of God, is the great ordinance for conversion and edification. It is the chief standing institution of *Christ* for this purpose, even to the end of the world.

Instance III. "These persons have supplies of their wants nearer at hand; and whatsoever their burdens be, they are nearer to relief;" whether their complaints are of a spiritual or temporal kind. How often has the soul that was in the dark and perplexed, received hints of direction in the ministry of the word! How often has the tempted christian been strengthened and supported there! And the mourning faint has been often comforted. And even when we labour under temporal necessities and sorrows, though the sanctuary is not furnished to supply every thing of this kind, yet the words of grace and consolation that have been heard in the church, have often born up the spirit of the poor and the afflicted; they have been led to the mercy-seat, the spring of all supplies, and they have gone away patient under their burdens, and rejoicing in hope of deliverance here, or full salvation hereafter. We in this world are travelling through a wilderness, a dry land: Now to be near a sweet fountain, or rather to have a sweet stream flowing by us all the way, is a choice comfort; while those that are afar off die for thirst, or go many a long hour without supply. See *Psal.* lxiii. 1, 2. where *David* being afar off from the house of God, cries out aloud after him. "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for

for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power, and thy glory," &c.

Happy those who dwell near the celebration of divine ordinances, for these are the persons who stand fair to obtain all advantages of the house of God, and "to be satisfied with the goodness of his holy temple."

Before I dismiss this second sense of the words, I shall make these two or three reflexions.

Reflexion I. "How much do these fellow-creatures want our pity, and our prayers, whose station places them afar off from the courts of God," and who are deprived of all the blessed advantages that are to be enjoyed in the church! Let us, whom divine providence has favoured with a nearer approach to God, fill his courts with the voice of joy and praise for our peculiar mercies; and let our hearts at the same time feel a becoming compassion towards those who are afar off. O pity those who dwell in the lands of darkness and heathenism, and have nothing near them that looks like religion, but the courts of idolatry, and their abominable rites and ceremonies; filthy ceremonies, and fantastic or cruel rites with which they worship images of wood or stone, and their brazen or their golden gods. Pity the wretches who dwell under antichristian tyranny, where every thing sacred is over-run with superstition, and the pure ordinances of the gospel are daubed over so thick with various paintings, and so buried under a load of human inventions, as to diminish, if not utterly destroy, all their use and power. Pity the protestants whose places of worship are demolished, and the sanctuaries are thrown down all over their land. Pity the holy confessors that are banished from the courts of God, and his beloved worship; and those who are shut up in prisons, inclosed in dungeons, under heavy bonds of iron; and those also who groan in secret in their own houses, under the terror of watchful and malicious persecutors. Let us put our souls in their soul's stead, and say then, "Would we not think ourselves fit objects for pity? And should we not desire the prayers of the saints of God?" Think then, christians, let you and I think with ourselves, who made the dreadful and the happy difference? Happy for us indeed, but dreadful for our brethren, who endure these banishments, or heavy bonds!

Reflexion II. Here let us reflect again, "how much more excellent is the gospel-state, than that of the *levitical* law! And how much more happy are christians in *England*, than the *Jews* in *Canaan*! Here we have houses of God near us, churches assembling in every town. They were forced to travel three times a year to *Jerusalem*, many long and weary miles: It is true God refreshed them in their journies, *Psal.* lxxxiv. 5—7. He gave them showers of rain when they were faint or thirsty; but they travelled through *Baca*, that is, the valley of weeping; many wants and inconveniencies attended them, and the difficulties and burdens of such a dispensation, were not light nor little.

We may yet continue this reflexion, concerning those who dwell in this great city, and say, "How great is the privilege the christians in *London* enjoy, above those who dwell in distant villages, or in little solitary cottages in the country!" Here we have the gospel preached in every street, and places of worship at our right hand, and our left: We dwell, as it were, in the courts of God; but the poor villager must travel many a mile, and perhaps through miry ways, to attend on the nearest ministrations of the word; and in the mean time the young and the feeble of the family must be confined at home. O what advances in knowledge and grace, what growth in holiness, and what approaches to heaven are to be expected from those who



dwelling so near the places of divine worship, and where the provisions of heaven are brought to our very doors!

“O how desireable a thing it is to enjoy all such circumstances of life, as give us liberty to frequent the courts of God! How much should we value, and how wisely should we improve such a blessing! Have a care of neglecting due seasons of worship, and be not negligent or infrequent in your visits to the courts of God, lest he lay some heavy restraints upon you, and divide you from his sanctuary. He has bands and chains of various kinds to cast upon such slothful professors; persecution or sickness, loss of your limbs, or loss of your senses, whereby you may be cut off from the blessings of his church; or he may break up house and remove far from you, because you do not visit him; or he may place your tabernacle afar off from his own, and cut short your liberty; for it is he which “determines the bounds of your habitations,” *Acts xvii. 26.*

O how unhappily are some persons overloaded with the cares of this life! How are they hurried and overwhelmed in a tumult of worldly affairs! And the business of their daily calling is too often ready to entrench upon divine hours and ordinances. How sore a distress is it to a pious christian to be confined and withheld from the courts of God, by long and tedious distempers of body! How painful is it to his spirit to lie languishing and faint on a bed of sickness, while others are made to drink of the river of pleasure, and refreshing streams of the sanctuary! They are sorrowful, while others are made joyful in the house of prayer. They are tasting the wormwood and the gall, while we feed on the pleasant things of “the house of God,” and are satisfied with the goodness of his holy temple.”

And thus I dismiss the second sense of the words, which probably was the precise meaning and chief design of the *Psalmist* himself, considering the dispensation under which he lived.

But when in the times of the new testament, we apply the language of the *jewish* prophets to the state and institutions of the gospel, we have encouragement enough from the example of *Christ* and his apostles, to extend and further enlarge the meaning of those antient phrases beyond the literal and *jewish* sense, and thus accommodate them to christian affairs.

The third sense of the text therefore, when enlarged and explained to evangelical purposes, may be this.

Approaching to God, in the style of the gospel signifies, either our being brought nigh to God, and reconciled to him by the blood of *Christ*, and the grace of the holy Spirit, as in *Eph. ii. 13, 18.* “In *Christ Jesus* ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh,—and have access by one Spirit to the Father.” Or else it means our drawing nigh to God in spirit and in truth, in prayer or holy meditation, &c. So *Heb. x. 21, 22.* “Having such a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart.”

Dwelling in the courts of God, may signify an union to the church of God, which is his spiritual house, upon a solemn profession of his gospel, and a visible allowed right to all the privileges and ordinances thereof. The church is the “house of the living God,” *1 Tim. iii. 15.* He dwells no longer in temples made with hands, nor confines his special presence to any single spot of ground, or any material building: The assemblies of his saints are his courts, his dwelling places; “where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is *Christ* in the midst of them,” *Matth. xviii. 20.* Every particular church of *Christ*, as well the church catholic,

or universal, is a "holy temple of the Lord, built up for a habitation of God through the Spirit," *Ephes. ii. 20, 21.*

Now surely, if the men of *Israel* had a blessing pronounced upon them in my text, whose habitation was near to that material sanctuary, we may with equal assurance, and with much greater delight say, "Blessed is the man, O Lord, whom thou chusest and causest to draw near unto thee, that he may dwell in thy house in the sense of the new testament; that he may be added to thy church," *AAs ii. 47.* That "he may be joined to the disciples," *AAs ix. 26.* That he may "be received in the Lord" *Phil. ii. 29.* That he may be united to the christian assemblies, and become a member of the church of *Christ*.

Let us again consider the *hebrew* expression, חֲצִירֵי שָׁכֵן, "that he may dwell in thy courts," which may with more exactness and propriety be rendered, "he shall or will dwell," &c. and then the verse will sound thus, "Blessed is the man whom thou chusest, and causest to approach unto thee; he shall dwell in thy courts," as a promised privilege; or he will do it as a voluntary and delightful practice; in which latter sense, the words will afford this doctrine.

Doctrine. "He that is caused in a spiritual manner to approach or draw near to God, will have a desire to dwell in the house of God, that is, to be united to his church."

He who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, and is brought near to God by the atoning blood of *Christ*, and the sanctifying influences of the holy Spirit, will desire to be a visible fellow-citizen with the saints, and to become one of the household. He who has frequented the courts of God, attending on the worship of the church, and has felt the special presence of God there, convincing, converting, and comforting his soul, will be glad to dwell there, and to join himself to the church, as a part or member of it, and that for these reasons following.

Reason I. "Because he finds so much delight in approaching near to God, that he desires still to be nearer." He feels that nearness to God is happiness; and he cannot have too much of that; he cannot be too near his chief good, and his soul's delight. When he has come up to the house of God, and only paid a visit there, he has tasted so much sweetness in this visit, that he cannot satisfy himself to be a mere visitant, where he may be an inhabitant; he would dwell where God dwells, and be always with him.

God himself, in infinite condescension, makes a visit to families, and to closets, where prayer is performed, and comforts praying souls. But God dwells in *Zion*, "this is his rest for ever, for he has desired it," *Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14.* Therefore holy souls would dwell there also. *David* would have the ark brought to *Zion*, that he might dwell with God: And he often longed to "dwell in God's house," *Psal. xxvii. 4.* *Peter* was near God on the holy mount, and he was immediately for "making tabernacles," and dwelling there, *Luke ix. 33.*

He that has drawn near to God in worship, enjoys so much pleasure in common ordinances, that he breathes after special ones: With God's invitations he is pleased, and persuaded to come, and he would fain taste the entertainment. When *Christ* by his messengers speaks in general to mankind, he finds a sweetness in the voice, he longs therefore to have *Christ* speak particularly to him as a believer and a friend. When *Christ* publishes love to the world, it is pleasant to hear it: But he longs to hear him say to his own soul, my beloved. He has heard wisdom inviting the sons of men to her feast. *Prov. ix. 5.* "Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled."



mingled." He has tasted of these provisions in the spiritual sense of them, and he would partake thereof in all the sensible emblems too.

He is well pleased with the covenant of grace, and he agrees to it heartily; he would therefore set his own seal to it, and receive a seal from God. He that has a true relish of divine privileges, will long after their increase and enlargement; he that has felt any thing of heaven, will get as near it as possible here on earth.

Now are these the breathings of our souls? Have we ever found such divine delight in approaching to God, as makes us long after greater degrees of nearness to him? We have reason to doubt, whether our hearts ever drew near to God in the common institutions of his worship, such as prayer, reading, and hearing the word, if we have no appetite to the special entertainments of his house, and the provisions of his holy table. We may justly question, whether our souls are brought near to God at all, if we have no desire to dwell with him.

Reason II. "He that feels grace begun in his heart by approaching to God, will be ever pursuing those methods whereby it may be carried on." The very word *oikodomen*, or edification, which is used in several places of the new testament to signify the growth of grace, does properly mean building up, and seems to have a special reference to the house of God, that spiritual building to which every true christian should belong, and that in a visible manner too. He that was convinced of sin and of righteousness, and was led into the glorious light of the gospel, by drawing near to God in public worship, when he was before blind and ignorant, will surely seek a greater nearness to God, that he may insure divine illuminations, and dwell always in the light. He that was sanctified and made a new creature, by approaching to God in the common ministrations of his temple, will lay himself under all the special advantages that the temple is furnished with, to maintain his new nature, and increase in holiness. The communion of the saints, and the fellowship of a church, is an appointed means for the increase of grace, and fruitfulness in every good work, *Psal.* xcii. 13, 14. "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God; they shall still bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing." And I think I may pronounce this truth boldly, "That soul has nothing of true religion or piety begun, who is perfectly contented with any little and low degrees of it, and does not desire it's increase."

The christian who has found God in his sanctuary according to his word, longs to be satisfied with more of his special goodness. You may read his encouragements in the words of the prophet, *Isai.* lv. 3, 11. compared with chapter lvi. 4—7. When the Lord said to him in the public ministry, "Incline your ear and come unto me, hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you;" he heard the invitation of mercy, and he entered into the covenant of the Lord, and he begun to taste his grace: He came, he heard, and his soul lives. He has found the word of God accomplishing his good pleasure, and prospered thus far in the thing for which it was sent: Therefore he joins himself to the Lord, and takes up his place in his house, and takes hold on his covenant in a public profession; he hopes, now he is brought to God's holy mountain, that he shall be made joyful in his house of prayer.

He that has found the accomplishment of some promises, would put his soul directly under the influence of all of them. He has faith, and believes that God is faithful, and will fulfil all his relations; he has trusted in several of the relations which God has assumed, and found them already fulfilled, as a faithful creator, preserver, redeemer,

redeemer, &c. now he would put himself under his care as a Father of the family, and a master of the house, as the king of his church; and when he enters into *Zion*, or joins himself to a christian church, he humbly expects to find those promises made good, *Psal.* cxxxii. 15, 16. "I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall shout aloud for joy." And *Psal.* xcii. 13. "Those who are planted in the courts of God shall flourish and be fruitful there."

Now it is proper to put this question to our own souls: Do those of us who are joined in holy fellowship take pleasure in our station in the church, as it is an appointed means to increase grace in us, and to promote universal holiness both of heart and life? Do we wait upon God in the solemn ordinances of his church, with a humble faith in his promises, that he will meet and bless us there?

And as for those of us who have not yet taken up our places in the house of God, do we desire that holiness should increase in us? And why then do we not breathe after the blessings of *Sion*, and an accomplishment of those promises which God has made to his church? What sign or evidence can we have that we ever begun to receive grace from God, if we have no longing desires of soul to enjoy greater degrees of it? And how can we pretend to long after growth in grace, if we refuse the appointed means of it?

Reason III. "He that is caused to draw near to God in public worship, finds his soul softened by the approaches of divine grace, and feels the awful impression of divine commands to perform social worship." He reads his duty plain by the light of nature, that there ought to be religious societies; and public honour paid to God: He reads it yet plainer in the word of scripture, that the original christians were wont to form themselves into churches, or sacred societies, to celebrate the institutions of their Lord, and are required by the apostle not to forsake these assemblies: His conscience feels the divine authority, and he can cannot resist plain duty.

It would be too large here to lay down half the reasons of church-fellowship, as a duty incumbent on those that have tasted of the grace of God; it may be proved in a typical way at least, from the practice of the *Jews*, and the church under the old testament, in their public and solemn covenanting with God: It may be further evidenced by the many prophecies and promises concerning *Zion*, some of which have a reference to new-testament times, and the assemblies of the saints under the dispensation of the gospel: It may be inferred from the directions of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, concerning the discipline of a church, as well as from the positive institution of the Lord's supper, which must not be celebrated but in a christian assembly: It may be argued from the many counsels and directions which saint *Paul* has given concerning various offices, and forms of order and government, which can have no place, but in a particular church: The great designs and ends of church-fellowship, with regard to the public honour of God, the glory of *Christ*, and the spiritual benefit of men, are sufficient proofs of this duty: And all these arguments are established and confirmed by the practice of the apostles, and the primitive converts.

Now I say, a soul that has approached unto God in divine ordinances, will obey divine commands: He that tastes sacred pleasure, will learn sacred duty. He that has received divine mercy, will reverence divine authority. So the saints in *2 Cor.* viii. 5. "They gave their own selves first to the Lord, and then resigned themselves to the directions and commands of the apostles, according to the will of God."

Now let us see whether we feel the influence of this command. Do we, who are joined in holy communion, continue our stations in a church of *Christ*, from the authority



authority of a divine institution, and love to the ordinance? Or is it because we can without difficulty or shame break the bonds of *Christ*, and cast his cords from us? And let us all examine by this rule, whether we truly approach unto God in ordinances, or no. Have we been melted by divine love into a compliance with all the institutions of God? Or can we easily content ourselves to make a mere common profession, without ever subjecting ourselves to the ordinances of God's house? If you believe the special solemnities of the church to be a divine appointment, and yet have no thought or desire tending that way, you will have much ado to prove that you are sincere in any part of worship.

Reason IV. "He that truly draws near to God, finds so much satisfaction in it, that he loves to lay himself under more and stronger engagements to abide near to him." Those that delight in seeking the Lord their God, will not only ask the way to *Zion* with their faces thitherward, but they will also agree together and say, "Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten," *Jer.* 1. 4, 5. In a solemn manner they will give themselves up to the Lord in the face of his church. They take pleasure to lay bonds on their souls to walk closely with God; and they believe, and rejoice that the great God engages himself at the same time to walk with them, according to his ancient promise, *Lev.* xxvi. 3, 12. "If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments and do them, I will walk among you, and will be your God; and ye shall be my people."

Besides, a person that is truly brought near to God by *Jesus Christ*, loves to put himself under the watch and care of *Christ*, and that in the most express and sensible manner, by coming into his house. He takes up his place there, that he may be guarded from those temptations, whereby the world might allure him to depart from God again. He gives himself up to the care and watchfulness of the pastor, whose business it is to watch over souls: He subjects himself to the watchful eye and care of all his brethren and fellow-christians in the church, that they may be as guards and assistants to him in his holy work. He thinks he can never lay himself under too many obligations to the Lord; and he desires that the vows of God may ever abide upon him, that his soul may be kept from all iniquity, and from wandering into forbidden ways.

Shall I intreat you now to enquire whether this be the temper of your hearts? Have you found so much pleasure in approaching God, and are you so fully persuaded that your happiness consists in it, that you are desirous to bind yourselves in the strongest manner to abide with God? Or do you think you have too many bonds upon you already? And is it for that reason you abstain from the fellowship of a church, lest ye should be tied too fast to religion, and have too many eyes and guards upon you? It is a dangerous sign that you have never been truly brought near to God, if you are willing to live at a looser rate, and are afraid of too many engagements to holiness.

Reason V. "He that draws near to God in worship, and enjoys the sweetness of the ordinances of *Christ*, will endeavour to maintain his public honour in the world." It is by such a public profession, *Christ* is honoured among men, and in his house are his ordinances celebrated. Now should christians refuse this duty, where would be a church to bear up the holy name of *Christ* in this sinful world? Where would be a house of God for ordinances to be administered in? It is therefore out of love to the ordinances where his soul has approached nigh to God, and out of love to *Christ*, to support his glory, and confess him among men, that such a person will dwell

dwelling in the courts, in the house of the Lord, and give up his name to *Christ* in the fellowship of his church.

And what can our consciences answer now to such an enquiry as this? What concern have we for the public honour of *Christ*? Can we pretend to have tasted of his grace, and have no regard for his glory? Do we plead his name before God as our only hope, and are we unwilling to confess his name before men? Are there none of you in this assembly, who hope you are brought near to God by the blood of *Christ*, and yet delay and refuse to give this public honour to him in the world? What would become of the profession of the name and glory of *Christ* among men, if all were of your mind, and took no more care to maintain it than you do? Where would any church of *Christ* be found? Where would the special ordinances of the gospel be administered? Or any such thing as the public communion of the saints? If all were so negligent in this matter as you are, churches would be lost, and the Lord's supper quite forgotten; though our Lord appointed it to continue till he come.

Reason VI. "He that is brought near to God, and united to *Christ*, will love to look like one that is near God, like a member of *Christ*, and one of the body." He that is of the family of the faithful, delights to appear like one of *Christ*'s household, and therefore will dwell in his house. Gospel visible churches are types of the invisible: And a true christian is not ashamed to own his relation to the church above, by his communion with the church on earth.

It is true, a person may be a child of God in secret, and of the household of *Christ*, and yet may not at present have taken up his place in the family, nor dwell in the house of God, nor be joined to any visible church; but then such persons look like strangers, like the children of this world, for they dwell with them in the visible kingdom of *Satan*: Now true christians would, or should look like themselves, and not appear like foreigners and strangers, but as "fellow-citizens with the saints." *Ephes. ii. 19.*

I confess there may be some seasons and circumstances, which may not only indulge, but even oblige christians to conceal their character and profession. Piety and prudence agree well together; and we are not to expose ourselves, nor our sacred things, to a cruel and scoffing age, without an apparent call of *Christ*. "Pearls must not be cast before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and tear us." *Matth. vii. 6.* But remember, my friends, that this can never be an excuse for a constant and an universal neglect of the profession of *Christ*, and communion with his churches: And doubtless the guilt of such a neglect is more heinous in a day of liberty, and when there is the least temptation and danger.

Reason VII. "He that approaches to God the Father, and holds communion with him, loves to be near the children, and to hold communion with the saints; for he that loves God, must love his brother also," *1 John iv. 21.* And he must shew his love by delighting in their company, and dwelling with them, in the house of their common Father. He must and will hold a visible fellowship with them, as he hopes he has a share in their invisible blessings. All their infirmities and their follies do not disgust him half so much, as the image of God in them gives him pleasure: He loves to be with them, for God is with them; and he longs to be one of them, for they are one with *Christ*, united to him in one Spirit. There is a more intimate freedom in holy conversation among the inhabitants of one house, among the members of a christian church. They grow into an inward acquaintance: There is an opening their bosoms and their hearts to their brethren, and a sacred



friendship in spiritual affairs. See what affectionate intimacy *David* expresses, and what kind things he speaks concerning a fellow-member of the *jewish* church, though he indeed proved a false one, *Psal.* lv. 13, 14. "Thou my equal, my guide, and my acquaintance; we took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company;" And fellow-christians in the same society do, or should maintain such a pious amity.

Surely we have but poor evidences that our souls approach to God in his worship, if we have mean thoughts of his family, and despise his children, as though they were not worthy to be one with us, or we ashamed to be one with them. Will God, the glorious and the holy dwell amongst them, and are they too despicable and unworthy to have our company? Let us ask our own hearts, if we are related to God by adoption, and become his children, why do we not join ourselves to the family, and hold communion with our brethren?

Reflexion I. What further remarks shall we make now, at last, upon this doctrine, and this discourse? Surely "they teach us to make a severe reflexion upon ourselves and our conduct; if we find no desire to dwell in the house of God, no breathings of soul after the fellowship of saints, and the special ordinances of the church of *Christ*." Either we labour under some mistake, some ignorance of duty; or we are under the power of some present temptation; or else our fancied approaches to God are but deceits and delusions. Observe my words, I cannot say this is the case of all that are not joined to the disciples, and added to the visible church; but this must be the case of all that have no desires of it. They that have no inclination to get nearer to God than they are, have a just reason to think they were never brought near him.

Reflexion II. "There are surely some sensible defects or corruptions in that church, or there is a decay of religion in it's members, where church-fellowship is not still esteemed a pleasure and a privilege." Where holy communion is an insipid and tasteless thing, there must be some degrees of distance and estrangement between God and his people; either God is in some measure withdrawn from that church, where saints delight not in their public assemblies and ordinances, or he is withdrawn from our souls, if we take not delight therein; for where God dwells among his saints, pleasure will dwell too. It is the presence of God makes heaven, where pleasures are grown up to their full perfection.

Let us ask our souls, whether we are not decaying christians? Did we not use to come up to the house of God with joy, and worship together with delight? And that perhaps in times of difficulty too, as well as in days of greater liberty? What a blessed frame of spirit was *David* in? *Psal.* xlii. 4. And surely we have felt the same sacred pleasure too, "when we went up, as it were, in multitudes to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise." Is it thus with us at present? Or have we lost the sense and savour of those days? Where is that holy desire, that impatient longing and thirsting after God, which once appeared among us? Our dwelling in the house of the Lord, has perhaps made the good things of his house familiar, common and contemptible. O let us strive and labour, and pray for recovering grace. Decays will grow upon us, and separate us farther from God, and from the delightful sense of his favour, unless we are watchful, and repent and renew our first love.

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Civil power in things sacred :

OR AN  
E N Q U I R Y  
AFTER AN  
ESTABLISHED RELIGION,

Consistent with

The just LIBERTIES of mankind, and practicable under  
every form of CIVIL GOVERNMENT.



NEW  
ESSAYS  
ON

Civil power in things sacred:

OR AN  
ENQUIRY  
AFTER AN

ESTABLISHED RELIGION

Consistent with

The just Liberties of mankind, and sanctified under  
every form of Civil Government.

# P R E F A C E.

**T**HE author of these papers has frequently fallen into company, wherein he had occasion to converse on the topics of liberty and power, both civil and religious : And having never settled and ranged his own ideas and reasonings thereupon in so exact and so harmonious an order as he wished, he some years ago set himself down to try if he could draw out his thoughts into a regular scheme, whereby he might better confirm or correct his own conduct. He then applied himself to a diligent and faithful enquiry, without consulting other authors, how far his own reason would carry him toward the establishment of any certain religion in a country or nation, with a real desire to find a just foundation for it, and try how far it could be brought into form and method.

And that he might secure himself the better from all prejudices arising from present establishments, he proposed to himself the idea of a new erected state or government of any kind whatsoever, laying aside all prepossessions and influences from the present statutes and customs of men, and from the appearances of things in any nation whatsoever, while he was engaged in these speculations.

In matters of practice he has always shewn himself on every occasion a constant and sincere friend and faithful subject to our *british* government; and as he endeavours to pay every one in church and state their due, so he rejoices in the protestant succession to the crown, and the illustrious family which possesses it. And it is the desire of his soul, that our present rightful sovereign king GEORGE the second may have every grace and blessing poured down upon his royal person, to render him a long and glorious instrument of divine mercy, to diffuse blessings over the whole protestant world, and particularly over the *british* nation.

As the author abhors the thought of raising seditions in the state under our happy constitution from any pretences either civil or religious, so he has no views of disturbing any character or set of men in those just privileges and possessions which they enjoy by the laws of the land, for he possesses all his own privileges by the same.

He is so well convinced of our happy situation above and beyond almost every other nation under heaven, that he does not suppose it can be either proper or lawful for any persons or parties among us to attempt to shake the present foundations of our government, in order to introduce in practice such a scheme of liberty in matters of conscience as these papers may describe in speculation. Surely we value our *british* constitution and the privileges we enjoy, both civil and sacred, at too high a rate, ever to bring the hazard and loss of them into a competition with any



new schemes or models, which may be formed by the warm imaginations or doubtful reasonings of men.

Yet it may be proper and useful to any man for his own satisfaction to enter into this subject, and to search it through and through, according to his best capacity, that he may form a better judgment of the many late contests in our nation concerning penal laws and tests in civil and in religious affairs. The author was very desirous to try "how far his reason could establish a national religion," and adjust and limit the common rights of mankind, both sacred and civil, under this establishment, in any country whatsoever, wherein religion may be professed in various forms; and at the same time to maintain a perfect consistence with all due liberty of conscience, and support the just authority of supreme rulers. What he had written on this subject he was desirous to publish as a matter of further enquiry to those who have thought much on this argument; and perhaps it may serve to lead those who have never much thought of it into a more natural and easy track of thinking and reasoning about it.

If any thing in this essay shall prove so happy as to shed one peaceful and serene beam of light upon this dark and noisy controversy, he hopes to find forgiveness and acceptance among his best readers: And he would take pleasure in seeing such light further improved by minds better furnished, till it spread itself into a fair and glorious day. Such a clear and harmonious view of these subjects would do much toward the security and ease of civil government in any particular occurrences, as well as toward the general advantage of true religion and the support of just liberty, which are three of the most valuable privileges of mankind, and the choicest blessings on this side heaven.

March 20, 1738-9.

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Civil power in things sacred:

O R,

An enquiry after an established religion, consistent with the just liberties of mankind, and practicable under every form of civil government.

S E C T I O N I.

*Of the nature and ends of civil government, with the several kinds of it, and it's extent to religion.*

**T**HE design of civil government is to secure the persons, the properties, the just liberty and peace of mankind from the invasions and the injuries of their neighbours: Whereas if there were no such thing as government amongst men, the stronger would often make inroads upon the peace and possessions, the liberties and the lives of those that were weaker; and universal confusion and disorder, mischiefs, murders, and ten thousand miseries would overspread the face of the earth.

II. In order to this general good, viz. the preservation of the persons of men with their peace and possessions, mankind have been led by the principles of reason and self-



self-preservation to join themselves in distinct civil societies; wherein as by a compact, expressed or implied, every single person is concerned in the welfare and safety of all the rest, and all engage their assistance to defend any of the rest when their peace or possessions are invaded: so that by this means every single member of the society has the wisdom and strength of the whole engaged for his security and defence.

III. To attain this end most happily, different societies have chosen different forms of government, as they thought most conducive to obtain it.

1. Some have deemed it proper to be governed by a single person, and have ventured to put the authority and power of making and executing laws for guarding their persons and properties, and for avenging their injuries, into the hands of a single person; and have obliged themselves to assist and support him in the due exercise of this authority. This is called kingly government or monarchy: And where this kingly power has no limitations, it is called absolute monarchy or sovereignty.

2. Others have committed this same power to the hands of a few great men or nobles, persons of riches, or high birth, or power, or who are supposed to have superior wisdom and influence, who shall act in concert with one another to promote this end. This is called aristocracy; especially when it is agreed that these great men shall have their heirs for their successors, or shall have a right to chuse their own successors themselves; for then the people have divested themselves of all share in the government.

3. A third sort have chosen a popular government, that is, where the people themselves meet and make laws, and determine things of importance by a common vote or the sentence of the major part. But where the society is so numerous, that the people cannot all meet together for this end, they have parcelled out themselves into many districts, and chosen particular persons to represent them in each district. Thus the people are said to act and govern themselves by these their representatives, which are chosen anew by the people as often they think fit, or at annual or any stated seasons which the people agree upon. This is called democracy; and such a state is a proper republic or commonwealth in the strictest sense.

4. There are other societies again, which have made a compound government out of several of these; so the ancient *roman* government had the "patres," or "patricii," or senators as their nobility, and yet the plebeians or common people had much share in the government too by their power in chusing officers, &c. After the year of the city three hundred and eighty seven, the two consuls were generally one patrician and one plebeian. Sometimes there is made a mixture of all these forms of government: Such was the *roman* under their emperors, if not under some of their kings; at least, there was the appearance of it.

But the most regular mixture seems to be that wherein the chosen representatives of the people have their distinct share of government, the nobles or great men have their share, and a single person or the king has his part and share in this authority, and all agreed upon by the whole community, or by persons chosen to represent them. This is called a mixed monarchy; and herein these three estates of the kingdom are supposed by mutual assistances and mutual limitations, not only to secure the common peace, the liberty and welfare of the nation from enemies, but to guard it also from any dangerous inroads that might be made upon it by any one of these three powers themselves. Such is the happiness of *Great Britain* under the king, lords, and commons.

IV. Here

IV. Here let it be noted, that whosoever has the power of making laws, whether the king, the nobles, or the people, or all these together, yet still the particular execution of these laws must be committed to many particular magistrates or officers, and they are usually fixed in a subordination to one another, each of them fulfilling their several posts throughout the nation, in order to secure the general peace.

V. In all these forms of government there is, as I hinted before, a compact or agreement between the governors and governed, expressed or implied, viz. that the governors shall make it their care and business to protect the people in their lives, liberties and properties, by restraining or punishing those who injure, attack or assault them; and that the governed submit to be punished if any of them are found guilty of these practices: And also that they oblige themselves to pay such homage, honours, and taxes, and yield such assistance to the governors with their natural powers, and their money or possessions, as may best obtain the great ends of government, and the common safety of the whole society.

VI. For this purpose therefore, each person by this compact willingly abridges himself of some part of his original liberty or property, for the common service of the society of which he is a member: And he engages himself with his powers and capacities to defend and preserve the peace, and order, and government of the society, so long as he and his fellow-subjects are protected by it, in the enjoyment of all their natural rights and liberties. The very reason of man and the nature of things shew us the necessity of such agreements.

VII. From this view of things it appears, that though no particular form of government, besides the ancient *jewish*, could claim divine right, yet all government, in general, is originally from God, as he is the author of nature and reason, and the God of order and justice: And every particular government which is agreed upon by men, so far as it retains the original design of government, and faithfully preserves the peace and liberties of mankind, ought to be submitted to, and is supported by the authority of God; for it is God our creator, who by the light of reason hath led mankind into civil government, in order to their mutual help, and preservation, and peace.

In this sense it is that the two great apostles *Peter* and *Paul* vindicate civil governors, and demand subjection to them from christians. *Rom. xiii. 1—4.* "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: The powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation, that is, are condemned; for rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil." *1 Pet. ii. 13.* "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme, or to governors as to them who are sent by him, for the punishment of evil-doers, and the praise of them that do well." What *St Paul* saith, is ordained of God, that is, in general, as civil government or civil powers, *St. Peter* calls the ordinance of man, that is, in particular, as to the several forms of this government which men agree upon, or appoint: And indeed God has left it to men to agree upon, and appoint the particular forms: And so far as any of them pursue and attain this end, they must be submitted to, and supported, as an appointment or ordinance both of God and man.

VIII. Though civil government is an ordinance of God, and appointed by him according to the light of reason, and is thus far supported by divine revelation, yet in it's proper aims and designs it hath no direct reach nor authority beyond the benefit of men in this world: Nor do the things of religion, nor the affairs of a future



state come within it's cognizance, any further than they have a most evident reference to the natural and civil welfare of men in the present life: It was only for the security of their natural and civil interests and rights, that men at first joined themselves in civil societies, and not that their governors should chuse their religion for them.

Government itself is a necessary thing in this world, and a natural or moral institution of God among persons of all sorts of religion, whether heathens, *turks*, or christians, to preserve them in present peace: Nor do any of these religions alter the nature of civil government \*.

IX. Whereas if civil government did properly extend it's authority to religion and the things of a future happiness, no government or governors could be said to be appointed of God who are of a false religion; and those only who know and teach, and promote the true religion, and lead people in a right way to this future happiness, could be of God's appointment; even as no government extending to civil things can be said to be of God any further than it tends to promote the civil peace and welfare.

But if such an unreasonable and absurd opinion as this were allowed, viz. that the appointment of true religion belongs to the civil government, and there is but one true religion, it would cut off civil government from being an appointment of God among all the nations of the earth, and in all ages of the world who had lost the true religion; and all those nations and ages would be left to everlasting anarchy and confusion, till God brought the true religion among them.

X. And on the other hand, if the authority of every civil government extended to direct the affairs of religion, and that by God's appointment; then every government would have a right to determine what shall be the religion of that society or nation; and by this means, as the true religion is professed by very few civil governments in comparison of the multitudes of false religions, there would be an obligation from God on the greatest part of mankind to submit to their governors when they enjoin a false religion, and receive, and practise it instead of the true, which is too absurd a thing to be supposed.

## S E C T I O N II.

*The necessity of acknowledging a God, and the religion of an oath.*

I. **T**HOUGH religion, so far as it relates to the salvation of our souls and a future world of happiness, doth not come within the cognizance of civil government; yet as the affairs of men are situated in this world under all governments, there are several things relating to our civil welfare which seem to require the knowledge and profession of a God; as these four for instance: 1. Witnessing in controversies between two parties. 2. Information in criminal cases. 3. Security against secret plots and mischiefs from the people. 4. Guarding against oppression and injustice of the rulers. Let us consider each of these distinctly.

1. The

\* What exception must be made for the *jewish* government, which was revealed to *Moses*, and was almost entirely divine, shall be taken notice of in it's due place.

1. The case of "witnessing in controversies between two contending parties requires the acknowledgment of a God." Partly through the ignorance of men, and partly through their evil inclinations, there will be controversies frequently arising among the people, which must be determined by the magistrate as a judge of right and wrong. Now in order to search into the truth of things, and the right of particular persons, it is not thought proper for the magistrate usually to give credit to any persons in their own cause, when there is no concurrent witness or witnesses who declare the same thing.

And whereas witnesses in many disputes about property may justly be suspected to warp from the truth through private influences, if there be no other person who can detect and discover them, therefore it is necessary they should have some knowledge, and make some profession of an invisible power who made and governs the world, who sees and hears and knows every thing which is done among men, and who is a guardian of justice and truth, and some time or other will terribly punish falsehood and lying.

2. "The case of information against criminals requires some profession of a God." Let it be considered, that whatsoever injuries or frauds, crimes or mischiefs, are practised or committed in any nation under these governments, they cannot be punished till those magistrates who are executors of the laws, are informed of them; nor can such informers at all times be safely credited, because they may have no regard to truth in themselves, or they may be swayed by some evil bias, unless they have some knowledge or belief and reverence of a higher power who knows all truth, and will avenge falsehood.

3 "To secure a state against secret plots and mischievous designs of the people requires the profession of a divine being." There are many frauds and plots, and secret evil practices which tend to the injury of mankind, to the ruin of all government and peace in a nation, and yet they cannot perhaps be found out by the eyes of men soon enough to prevent the mischief intended. Therefore the belief and awful sense of some all-knowing and over-ruling power is needful to guard the evil minds of men against contriving these secret mischievous practices, and the profession of this belief is a necessary band of common union and safety.

4. "The acknowledgment of a God is necessary to guard officers and rulers from oppressing the people." Magistrates or officers themselves may be easily inclined or tempted to neglect their duty to the people, they may be bribed or frightened to pass wicked and unjust judgments on men, or to commit grievous outrages and acts of violence upon them, if they have no knowledge nor belief of any superior power who rules the world, and will punish unfaithfulness, injustice, violence, oppression and falsehood in all ranks of his creatures, whether high or low, rich or poor.

II. In order therefore to a peaceful and successful government, and to the preservation of every man in his rights and liberties, it is necessary that both the governors and the subjects should acknowledge some God, that is, some superior invisible power who governs the world, who knows all secret things, and will punish those crimes or those acts of injustice or falsehood, either in the governor or the governed, which violate the common welfare of mankind, and which are committed in secret.

Whatever some witty persons have pretended, that a kingdom or state of atheists may be supported without any regard to a God or religion, it has huge and dreadful inconveniencies attending it, considering the wicked and perverse tempers and manners of men.



III. Now to secure a civil government in the execution of it's proper designs, to secure the mutual fidelity of subjects and their governors, and to secure the truth of witnesses in matters of controversy, and in informations brought against any criminals, the bond of an oath is the ultimate resort of men: For an oath is a solemn appeal to a God, concerning the truth of what they declare; it is an appeal to some superior and invisible power, who will avenge falsehood and perjury wheresoever it is practised, though it should not or could not be found out by the search of men.

And let it be observed that an oath or an appeal to God concerning truth always implies in it, that we hope for a blessing from this God upon our fidelity, if we speak the truth; but that we imprecate the vengeance of this God to fall upon us, if we knowingly speak what is false, or act contrary to our covenants or engagements.

IV. I would fain have it observed also yet further that it will be a much more effectual means to secure mankind from perjury, and from every degree of falsehood or violation of an oath, if the oath were always administered by the magistrate with the utmost solemnity, and if the words in which an oath is formed did express the imprecation or curse upon falsehood strongly and terribly, rather than if it expressed only the blessing upon truth and faithfulness. And I have often thought that one reason why there is so much perjury in our nation, and the religion of an oath has so little force upon the consciences of men, is because in our common form, "So help me God," the blessing only is expressed, and the curse is concealed and only implied at a distance; so that very few who take the oath have such an awful sense of their transactions with an almighty avenging power at such a season as they ought to have, for want of the plainer appearance of the imprecation, as well as for want of greater solemnity in the manner of administering and taking the oath.

I well remember in former years a gentleman, who was a justice of peace in the country, informed me that ignorant people would easily be persuaded by their neighbours to go to take their oath before him concerning particular facts, when they would not be persuaded to assert the same thing boldly with some terrible imprecation themselves, of broken or withered limbs, if they did not utter the truth.

V. Upon the whole it is necessary, that the governors and governed should acknowledge and profess their belief and veneration of a God, that is, of some superior and invisible power who will punish perjury and violence and secret crimes against the welfare of mankind. And it seems a most proper and agreeable, if not a necessary thing, that each should be bound to the other, that is, the governors to the people, and the people to the governors by the solemnity of an oath, to fulfil their mutual duties and engagements of protection and obedience. In *Great Britain* the kings are engaged hereto by their coronation-oath, and the people by the oath of allegiance.

The coronation-oath obliges the king to grant and keep and confirm to his people the laws and customs, &c. and also, to his power, to cause law, justice and discretion in mercy and truth to be executed in all his judgments.

The oath of allegiance obliges the people to support the king in all his just rights and powers, so far as he can, doth, and will protect his subjects in their just rights and properties.

It is evidently a mutual contract, and both are bound to each other by this solemnity of an oath.

VI. It seems to me also very proper, that the outward ceremony or action which is used in swearing, whether it be lifting up the hand, or kissing the book, &c. be publicly and authoritatively declared, not to be designed as a religious ceremony, whereby we pay our invented honours to God in the act of swearing, but that it is used only as a civil gesture or sign, whereby we testify to the world that we do call God to witness to the truth of that we speak. Hereby we shall secure many scrupulous persons from the fear of taking an oath with that sign, lest they should thereby worship the great God by ceremonies invented by men, which many good subjects have thought unlawful. Or if they do still really and in conscience scruple any particular gesture or outward sign, or ceremony, their oath expressed in full and strong language should be taken without it.

VII. If any particular persons of known sobriety should declare solemnly, that from a principle of conscience they scruple the form of an oath or a solemn appeal to God concerning the truth, I think they are bound to give some proper satisfaction to the government, that the form of words which they use in witnessing, in affirmations or promises, &c. shall be deemed in all respects equal to the obligation of an oath, viz. that their consciences are equally bound by it before God, and that they shall incur the same penalties among men by the violation thereof. This will relieve the people that are called quakers, who will not take any oath: And indeed without some such security no person is fit to enjoy the privileges of civil government, nor to be a member of any state, who refuses to bind his truth by an oath.

VIII. And therefore if there be any person who thinks and believes that the obligation arising from an oath, or from such a solemn affirmation made before the civil powers, may be dissolved and nullified by any other power upon earth, such a person may be lawfully excluded from becoming a member of the state, or enjoying any of the privileges thereof; unless he can find some way or other that shall be justly satisfactory to the state, concerning his truth or fidelity to his neighbours and his governors. For where one party cannot or will not effectually oblige themselves to allegiance and fidelity, the other party is not bound to afford them civil protection and the privileges of the government. How far the papists are concerned in this matter, let others judge: But I shall have occasion to mention this hereafter.

IX. I will not stay here to debate whether it be necessary for this purpose of swearing for the uses of civil government, that men should acknowledge one single almighty power, that is, the true God in opposition to all false gods: For it is certain that some governments, who worshipped idols or false gods, did believe that these invisible powers would punish injustice and fraud among men, and thereby did maintain and secure themselves, and made their nation tolerably peaceful and flourishing for years or ages. But this may be asserted with abundant evidence and truth, that the common acknowledgement of the one living and true God, both by princes and people, by the governors and governed, is by far the best and surest band of government and the common peace: But I shall have occasion to mention this also afterward.



## S E C T I O N    I I I.

*Of public teachers of the laws and morality.*

I. **A**S there are many social duties of the law of nature which regard the security of the lives and properties of men, for which all government is designed; such as honesty, justice, truth, gratitude, goodness to men, honour, and fidelity to superiors, &c. so there are many crimes which are destructive to their properties or their lives, or to their whole government and peace; such as treason in all degrees, cheating, stealing, robbing, plundering, adultery, assaults, maiming, murder, and various other sorts of injuries to the bodies of men, to their known rights, powers, and privileges, as well as to their estates, their reputation, good name, and comfort: All which ought to be in the power of civil governments to forbid and restrain by proper laws; which laws should sometimes have proper rewards appointed for the innocent informers and assistants of the magistrates, but always penalties to be inflicted on the criminal.

II. There are also some personal duties of the law of nature, such as sobriety and temperance, frugality and industry; and there are sins against this law which relate primarily and chiefly to single persons, such as intemperance of every kind, gluttony, drunkenness, profuse and riotous living, universal idleness or neglect of labour among the poor, fornication, self-murder, &c. which though they do not perhaps so sensibly, directly, and immediately injure our neighbours, yet they are very pernicious to any state or government, inasmuch as they dispose men greatly to the commission of injuries against their neighbours, the violation of the rights of mankind, and the peace of society and government. These crimes seem therefore properly to lie under the cognizance and the restraints of the civil government.

III. Now as there are laws which are or should be made in every society for the preservation of the peace, and for supporting and carrying on the common welfare of the society; and as some of these laws should forbid those social crimes, such as cheating, stealing, murder, adultery, &c. and these personal crimes, idleness, drunkenness, &c. so it is necessary in a well-constituted government, that there should be some common appointed way of communicating the knowledge of these laws to the people, that they may be well apprized what is their duty and what they are forbid to practise. Surely the laws of a land should be made known to those who are to walk and live according to them, and who are to be punished for not keeping them.

And by the way I wish I could give some sufficient reason why, when new laws are made in *Great Britain* by the three estates of the kingdom, there should not be as much care taken in a legal promulging them or the substance of them, so far as concerns all private persons at least, through every city and town in the nation, as there is of publishing the mere will of the prince by royal proclamations, which must be read in every market-town. Multitudes of people are as ignorant of the laws, as they would be of proclamations, if not published in this manner.

IV. And for the same reason, since the awful veneration of a superior invisible power that knows all things, and can punish falsehood and secret crimes, is necessary

fary to government, there should be some care taken by the governors that the knowledge of this superior invisible power should be some way proclaimed or propagated amongst all the subjects.

V. And though it is possible, as was hinted before, that the belief and acknowledgment of several gods, who are avengers of falsehood and secret mischief, may be consistent with the tolerable welfare and conveniencies of the state, yet it must be granted that polytheism, or the belief of many gods, hath so much absurdity in it, and is so contrary to the light of nature, that many inconveniencies may arise from it; and therefore it is highly proper that the existence and perfections, the providence and natural and moral government of the one true God should be some way made known through the nation, together with the natural veneration or reverence that is due to him from all men.

VI. Whether the belief and profession of the one true God should be imposed on all the nation under any penalty, I leave others to determine. I rather think it should not; and for these three reasons.

Reason I. There may be many heathens who worship several gods, who yet may be useful members of the state; they may heartily agree to an original compact of government, and may seal it sincerely with an oath; they may dread the vengeance of their gods falling upon them for falsehoods, and may perhaps add great wealth and strength to a government or nation; why then should they be utterly secluded from it?

If it be objected that no such persons as idolaters were permitted to live in the *jewish* state by the laws of God, Mr. *Locke* in his admirable letters of toleration has answered that difficulty, by shewing that the *jewish* government was a theocracy wherein God, even *Jehovah*, the one true God, was their political king, and therefore the acknowledgment of any other God was treason against the state; but it never was so in any other nation upon earth\*.

Reason II. If the members of any state or government happen to be heathens or idolaters, or perhaps *manichees*, who believe two sovereign principles or powers, one of good, the other of evil, &c. they may be invited and inclined to hearken to the principles of true religion and christianity, if they are not utterly discouraged by finding penalties laid upon their mistaken belief; and they might by the same gentleness continue their favourable opinion of us, and grow up by degrees into believers of the one true God. I might repeat the same thing concerning the heathen neighbours of such a state or government, and strangers who come to traffick with them. By seeing the gentleness and goodness of such a christian nation, they by degrees may attend to the gospel of *Christ*, and be converted and become his disciples, and may be allured to unite themselves and their riches and powers to support this government. Penalties may make dissemblers and hypocrites, but good christians are not to be made this way.

## Reason III.

\* I would not willingly divert from my subject here so far as to shew, that God was the proper political Lord and supreme king of the *Jews*, even after they had kings, as well as before. It was God himself who from time to time pointed out by inspiration, or by extraordinary providences, the *judges* who should rule them: It was God who pointed out their kings as his deputies in an immediate manner, as *Saul*, *David*, *Solomon* who was one of *David's* younger sons, &c. It was God who divided the kingdom into two kingdoms, who by his prophets gave *Jeroboam* ten tribes, who cut off his posterity and anointed *Jehu*, and again cut off his posterity, and did what he pleased in altering the successions of their kings; *Jehovah* the holy one of *Israel*, who was their God, was also their king.



Reason III. If it be allowed that polytheists should lie under any penalty by the law for owning many gods, let us suppose a *socinian* or an *arian*, a *turk* or a *deist* to be the supreme governor: May he not take into his head to lay the same penalty on *athanasians* for owning and adoring three distinct, infinite and almighty persons, of which the *unitarian* governor perhaps can get no other idea than that of three gods? We well know that the governments of this world are not wont of themselves to be too nice or too just in their distinction of theological matters, nor too ready to put a favourable construction on the sentiments of those, who dare to differ from them. I fear the remonstrances made by the *athanasians* drawn from a few theological or metaphysical distinctions, or from the holy bible itself, would not easily persuade the *arian* or *socinian* ruler, the *turkish* or *deist* governor to make any saving difference between them and other polytheists: And thus the idolater with many gods, and the *athanasian* with his trinity would fall under the same public penalties, how unjust soever such a sentence might be, if thoroughly examined by christian principles.

VII. As those persons who are appointed by the government to teach the people the civil rules or statutes of the land, should be well instructed in them themselves, that as far as possible the people might never be led into a mistake in matters wherein their lives and properties are concerned; so for the same reason, the persons that should be appointed by the state to instruct the people in the knowledge of a God and the religion of an oath, and to acquaint them with the rules of these personal and social virtues which are so necessary to good government, I say, these teachers should be themselves well instructed in the knowledge of God, of vice and virtue, and be also to all appearance pious and virtuous and loyal, practising that reverence to God, and those civil and moral laws which they teach, that with more success they may instruct the people in these things which are of so much importance to their civil welfare and the preservation of the government.

VIII. As taxes are raised by the state, and customs and tributes of various kinds justly imposed by the government, in order to defray the public expences and to pay the public officers; so it seems reasonable that those public officers who are appointed to instruct the people in the knowledge of the laws of the land, and in the knowledge of these virtues and vices which affect the civil society, as well as in the knowledge of a God who will punish secret wickedness, and in the sacredness and solemnity of an oath, which is the bond of government, I say, it is reasonable that these public teachers should be paid or supported out of the civil list, if I may so express it, or the tribute raised for the support of civil government, since the support and peace of the civil government so much depends upon it\*.

And perhaps we might venture so far as to say, that the preachers of natural religion in all the more necessary and obvious doctrines and duties of it, which have so evident a connexion with the civil prosperity and welfare of the state, may be lawfully maintained by the government out of the national tribute appointed to supply the civil list; but I affirm it not at present. I would speak with all just diffidence in things dubious.

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\* Long since this was written, I met with a particular appointment of such public sermons or instructions, to be given to the people in *China*, by their *Mandarins* or governors of towns and provinces, on the first and the fifteenth days of the month; which is actually practised by them there, as *Pere Du Halde* gives us an account in his late history of *China*, volume I. page 53. where he enumerates all the sixteen texts given them by the emperor to enlarge upon one or another of them, twice a month in public

## S E C T I O N IV.

*Of the people's attendance on these public teachers.*

I. **N**OW a question arises here, if there are public officers appointed to teach the laws of the land, and also to teach the things that relate to the knowledge of the true God, the religion of an oath, and those virtues and vices which concern the civil interests of the society, may not the supreme power likewise oblige the people at certain seasons to come and attend the lectures of these public teachers, supposing that these times and seasons are so wisely adjusted as not to interfere with the civil interests of mankind or of that nation. To this I answer,

II. I see nothing in it inconsistent with the rights or just liberties of mankind : And upon this account I would ask, may not a christian prince appoint a certain hour of the first day of the week which christians esteem sacred, to be employed in hearing these lectures ? And for the same reason might not a *jewish* prince appoint some part of the last day of the week, which the *Jews* count sacred, for persons to hear such lectures ? And a *turkish* prince appoint his lectures of the same kind upon a *friday* for the same reason ?

III. And I might add further, that if the state judge it necessary, that one day in seven, or nine, or twelve, or twice in a month people should be restrained from their usual labours in public, partly to give rest to the labouring part of a nation, both man and beast, and partly that they may be more at leisure for these public lectures in their regular course, I do not at present see any thing in it inconsistent with the just liberties of the people : Provided always that the time or times appointed for such public lectures, are not so numerous nor so large as to hinder the common welfare of the people in their several particular employments, or to obstruct or prevent or too much curtail and diminish religious services, or the necessary duties wherein conscience obliges each of them to pay special honours to the God they profess ; of which hereafter.

IV. It is granted indeed, that the *Jews* so long as they were a nation under a distinct government of their own, were actually under a theocracy ; God was their political head and their king ; and therefore the civil and the religious concerns of that nation were more intermingled one with another in the same pages of the bible ; and the religious observance of certain days and times was appointed by God, as the particular governor of that land as well as the universal Lord of conscience ; which land was not very large in its whole extent. But these peculiarities of government cannot be applied to any other nation or people whatsoever ; nor even to the *Jews* at present, who are now no united nation, but are abandoned by God their king to be a scattered people throughout the earth.

Though nothing can be inferred from the special laws of the *Jews* about days appointed for public worship under severe penalties, which would justify other magistrates in enacting such laws, yet the nature of the thing, if such lectures of civil and

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moral

lic assemblies. Almost every one of them contains some moral virtue, and there is a specimen added of the sermon of a *Mandarin* upon one of them. It may be observed indeed as a defect in the choice of these subjects, that not one of them has any relation to their gods or religion, except that which orders the stifling of new sects, and I think is the only one that cannot be vindicated.



moral laws must be read, will certainly require certain times to be appointed for reading them and attendance upon them. And therefore it will be absolutely necessary that such days, or hours at least, be legally settled by public authority, since the welfare of the state requires it.

V. It will be said perhaps, that however these attendances are required by a law, it is not to be supposed they will be punctually performed nor this law obeyed, unless there be some penalty annexed to the neglect. I acknowledge it, and therefore the penalty should in such cases be so wisely framed and limited, that it may not exceed the damage the public may be supposed to sustain by such a neglect.

As for the neglect of attending these public lectures, I fear it will hardly be esteemed a sufficient penalty, that persons by this neglect will continue ignorant of the laws moral and civil, and thereby be more exposed to incur the several penalties to which the breaking of those laws will subject them. If any other penalties be needful, let others propose them. I would be very cautious in appointing penalties, though a law has but small force without them.

VI. But it will be objected here in opposition to any such penalties, since God only is the Lord of conscience, no government has any right or authority to impose any thing on the consciences of it's subjects, which they solemnly declare or swear they believe to be unlawful or offensive to God, as shall be more particularly shewn afterward: Suppose then any persons should pretend their conscience does not permit them to attend upon these established moral lectures of the veneration due to a God, and the various civil duties to men on those days or at those seasons that are appointed by the state for these lectures: As for instance, suppose a christian in a *turkish* country be appointed to attend on these public lectures on the Lord's day or *sunday* which he accounts sacred; or suppose a *jew* should be required to give his attention to them on a *saturday*, which is his sabbath; would not this be a violation of the rights of conscience, if this attendance on these established lectures were imposed with a penalty?

I must answer still, that conscience in things relating to God must not be imposed upon, nor can men be obliged to alienate sacred time to mere civil purposes, but where the real necessities of the state require it; and there I suppose God will not account it criminal to comply with the necessities of the state on his own sacred day; as for instance, to stop a flood, to quench a fire, or to repel an invasion.

And as the consciences of the subjects should not without necessity be imposed upon to hear these national statutes or civil lectures, where they think the sacred time is profaned hereby; so it is still more evident that no person should be constrained against his conscience to be a reader of these civil lectures, who thinks either the reading itself or the time of reading to be unlawful or offensive to God. And I think it can never be supposed that the necessities of the state can be such, as to require those very persons to read these things who think it unlawful to do it. Surely others should do that office.

Yet if I may speak my most free and reasonable thoughts here, I can hardly believe the great God would account it a violation of some part of his appointed sabbath, whether *saturday* or *sunday*, to hear such lessons of morality and virtue, or lessons of the knowledge of God and duty to him and to civil governors, which should be the chief substance of these lectures: For we find even under the strictnesses of the *jewish* sabbatizing, our blessed Saviour himself went to a feast at the house of a pharisee, *Luke* xiv. 1. and he taught them there good-manners and civility as well as morality, viz. "that they should not sit down in the chief place lest they should

should be removed with shame to some lower room." And it is certain that all the books of *Moses* were read in their synagogues on the sabbath-day, wherein now and then the laws of their civil government and rules of their civil life filled up whole chapters, and employed a considerable part of the time of their attendance. But we must remember indeed that God was their king, and therefore sacred and civil affairs were intermingled.

And if such days as some persons repute sacred should be appointed by the state for these lectures, perhaps it is proper that the christians or the *Jews* in such a nation should be content to take other hours of the same *saturday* or *sunday* to worship their God upon his own appointed day, with what they suppose to be his own instituted forms or peculiar modes of worship: Always supposing, as before hinted, that the reading of the laws of the land, or rather short abstracts of them, take up but a small part of that time which is supposed to be sacred.

VIII. However if any princes or any governors would shew themselves to be fathers of their people, should they not with all tendernefs and care appoint such times and seasons for these public and established lectures, as might not give offence to the consciences of any of their subjects as far as possible? Nor should the penalties or very small fines for the absence of any of their subjects at such appointed seasons exceed what a tender father would see necessary for the welfare of the state to inflict on his son, who would willingly serve and obey him in those things, which yet a mistaken conscience and his sense of duty to God hardly permits him to perform.

And in all these things let it be still observed and inviolably maintained, that no law should ever be enacted nor any penalty of any kind established, but what appears necessary for the good of the state or the public civil welfare; beyond which the authority of men in civil government cannot reach\*.

## S E C T I O N V.

### *The qualifications of complete subjects of the state, and of the magistrates thereof.*

I. **T**HUS far then we have proceeded, and it appears that the knowledge of a God, and of the duty of obedience to governors in civil things according to the laws of the land, together with moral duties that are necessary to the welfare of the community and the support of government, ought to be taught to all the people, and I think the people ought to attend and learn something of them.

II. It must be always granted and allowed in all governments, that during the state of infancy or minority every person born in the nation, and especially every child of a member of the community, is to be esteemed so far a member of it, as to receive protection from the government, upon the allegiance of it's parents; and to enjoy all those privileges which a minor is capable of.

III. But what if we should suppose this membership arising from his parents, together with the privileges thereof should cease when he arrives at age? I enquire then, whether it may not be a very proper thing that every person or at least every man, at

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\* Note, this section as well as this whole treatise was written a long time before the act about reading the law made against the murderers of captain *Porteous* in *Scotland* was framed or thought of.



the age of twenty-one years, should in some court of justice or before some magistrate, be required by law to declare or profess this his veneration of a God, and his obedient regard to these moral and civil laws, which it is supposed he has learned in the great and general articles of them, so far as they are consistent with his duty to God; and this in order to become a personal partaker of the privileges of the government for the rest of his life, and to be made a complete member of the state.

Is it reasonable that any man should enjoy all the privileges of any society who will not oblige himself to the general and necessary rules of the society? And would not such a law be more likely to persuade and constrain parents to take some care that their children should be acquainted with these things which are so necessary to the welfare of mankind and of the state? And that they should have some tolerable knowledge of them before they arrive at the age of man, when the law calls upon them to become complete and personal subjects of the state?

IV. Does it not seem very necessary also, that all who are constituted magistrates or officers in the state, should not only profess these things at the time of their being invested in their office, but that they should also be persons, who to all appearance practise according to their profession? For how shall we suppose those persons will be fit guardians or executors of the civil or moral laws, who themselves manifest by their practice that they have no regard to them? Is it not evident that a man who abuses the name of God by profane swearing and cursing, who is given to drunkenness or lewdness, cheating and lying, acts of violence and oppression, or any scandalous crime which interferes with the good of mankind and the welfare of a government; I say, is it not evident that such a man should never be made a magistrate or officer for the execution of the laws of the land? Is not this of vastly greater importance than to enquire into the speculative opinions of men and their peculiar formalities of worship, in order to judge whether they should be made officers in the state?

V. Would there also be any unreasonable hardship or any inconvenience in it, if such a civil officer who is found guilty of the public violation of the civil or moral laws of the state, should be exposed to a double penalty upon the transgression of any of these moral or civil laws? Or sometimes perhaps, if the penalty be a fine, may it not be made tenfold or more according to the quality or character of such an offender? Would not this be a more powerful means, of keeping both magistrates and people within the rules of virtue and public safety.

## S E C T I O N VI.

### *Of public worship on the principles of natural religion.*

I. **T**HOUGH we have already spoken concerning the veneration of a God as necessary in civil government, yet we have not hitherto considered any special act of religion to be performed toward him besides the religion of an oath.

It comes now to be enquired, whether the acknowledgement of a God in a sufficient manner to answer the purposes of civil government, does not also imply and demand, some public veneration or worship to be paid to him at certain seasons, that the world may see, as far as outward actions can manifest it, that we believe and reverence a divine power? This was supposed to be so necessary to the establishment of

of a state upon proper foundations, that Mr. *Locke*, that great patron of liberty, in the laws which he drew up for *Carolina*, appointed, that no man should have any estate or habitation in it, that does not acknowledge a God, and that this God is publicly and solemnly to be worshipped. Article 95.

II. Now the most natural, obvious and necessary parts of worship, are praise and adoration of this God, on account of his powers and perfections, the invocation of him by prayer for the blessings we stand in need of, and thanksgiving for the blessings we have received, acknowledging all that we have, even our being and our comforts, to be derived originally from him.

III. May not then every civil government appoint certain persons to offer up public prayers and praises unto the great God at certain stated seasons, and require the attendance of the people on this worship, since this is an act of natural religion, and some public worship seems necessary for every subject of the state to approve himself a believer in a God? I answer,

It is difficult to find how this may be done in any nation without intrenching upon the liberty of mankind, and imposing upon the consciences of some of the inhabitants of the land; and that for these reasons.

IV. Reason I. First, It has been already granted that all the people or inhabitants of the land may not have learned to acknowledge the one true God, and if they happen to be heathens or polytheists, they may think it hard, to be constrained by a magistrate to worship, as the *athenians* did, an "unknown God;" *Acts* xvii. 23. at least till they have been all so far taught and instructed as to know, believe, and profess the true God alone.

V. Reason II. Again, If the one true God be thus publicly worshipped merely according to the dictates of the light of nature, there may be several sects in the nation who may think it necessary to worship him with the addition or mixture of their peculiar rites and ceremonies, which they suppose divine, whenever they come before him; and therefore they should never be compelled to attend this mere natural worship. Christians would say, they are particularly required to worship the true God, in the name and by the mediation of *Jesus Christ*, according as our Lord has taught them. *John* xiv. 6. "No man cometh to the Father but by me." *John* xvi. 24. "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name, ask and ye shall receive." And St. *Paul* tells us, that whatever we do, and especially in divine worship, of which he is there speaking; "it should be all in the name of *Christ*." *Col.* iii. 17. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord *Jesus*, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Now a christian may think it unlawful to come and worship even the one true God together with the deists, and to join with them in those prayers and praises which are not offered in the name of *Christ* or by his mediation, and therefore he should never be constrained to attend this natural worship by any penalty.

VI. Reason III. I know not how far it may be supposed to alleviate this difficulty and make the conscience of every christian more easy, to tell him, that there are many parts of worship paid to God in christian churches without the actual use of the name of *Christ*. Do we not sing *David's* psalms? Do we not repeat the Lord's prayer? And if it be lawful to address God by several of these psalms or this prayer, wherein there is not the least mention of the name or mediation of *Christ*, may we not join with the natural religion and worship of deists in their prayers and praises, supposing that all their expressions be conformable to what reason and the light of nature dictate; which the christian religion always pre-supposes and confirms?

VII. Reason



VII. Reason IV. If it shall be said here, that when God is worshipped by *jewish* psalms or by the Lord's prayer, christians do or should in their own mental meditations join the name of *Christ* and his mediation to these addresses to God; may it not be said also, that the same mental meditations may join the name and mediation of *Christ* to all these public and national invocations and adorations of God performed according to the light of nature?

VIII. Reason V. If this might be allowed, there would be then indeed a sort of natural religion, which is the foundation of all true revealed religion, which might be taught universally to all the people, which might be practised and established through the nation, and perhaps be supported by the state: But still I fear the universal attendance on worship could not be commanded under any penalty, because all christian people will not or cannot satisfy their consciences with the salvo proposed; and perhaps other sects may dislike it too upon the same foundation.

IX. Reason VI. And besides, many persons may find their consciences dissatisfied with the men whom the state shall chuse to offer up their social worship to God; they may be dissatisfied with other expressions or other omissions in the public worship or in the appointed forms thereof, besides those which I have mentioned; they may be also dissatisfied to have communion in worship with a congregation of deists, or with mere unitarian worshippers, if they profess the holy scripture and the trinity. Many sects may declare their consciences are really dissatisfied with this worship, because all men are bound to offer their best unto God, and they would complain that such mere natural worship is far below the best that they could offer; now the state has no power to compel the consciences of men to join in that worship of God which they dislike or disapprove as unworthy of him or unacceptable to him, provided that they do every thing else that is necessary to become faithful members of the state.

## S E C T I O N VII.

### *Of particular religions supposed to be revealed.*

I. **S**UPPOSING that some public worship must be authoritatively required or maintained in a state, for the welfare of the state itself, let us enquire further then how it is possible to be done without infringing natural liberty.

Besides the general principles of natural religion, which seem reasonable and proper to be made known to all the people, as has been before declared, there may be several particular sects in the nation, both among the governors and governed, who have other special articles of faith and other peculiar rules of practice or worship, ceremony or sacrifice, over and above these natural and moral doctrines or duties. And these peculiarities of religion are believed to come to them by a revelation from the God they worship, or from men who were taught of God, which is much the same.

II. Now if public worship must be maintained, every man would chuse to do it in his own way: And every man, both governor and governed, ought to have full liberty to worship his God in that special way and manner which his own conscience believes to be of divine appointment, or which he thinks to be most necessary, in order to secure the special favour of his God and his own future happiness. This is a personal

personal obligation which natural conscience, or the light of reason, which is the "candle of the Lord" within us, lays on every individual person among mankind; supposing always that this peculiar religion does not break in upon the just rights or the peace of our neighbours. And indeed if it does unjustly invade their peace or their natural or civil rights, this seems to be sufficient evidence that it does not come from God, who is the original author and supreme guardian of the natural rights of his creatures: Nor will any wise and righteous government indulge such mischievous pretences of conscience or divine revelation, though in any other case, I see not that any governors have a right to forbid it.

III. The great God who gave us all reason and conscience, never appointed the conscience, nor the reason, nor the will of one man absolutely to appoint the religious duties of another; except always in case of infancy, where conscience or reason is not grown up to it's proper exercise, and parents are intrusted with the education and the religion of their children till they can learn for themselves the knowledge of God and their duty to him.

The phantom or *chimera* of an universal conscience given by God himself to all supreme ruling powers for the authoritative guidance and sway of the ruled in every nation in religious affairs, is so poor and sorry a pretence, and is big with such absurdities, that it is now banished out of the books and opinions of every nation where liberty is known; nor should it ever be recalled or revived lest God, as the author of all civil government should be made the author and commander of all that idolatry and superstition, which the governors of this world may command.

IV. Where persons therefore profess the obligations of conscience to any revealed religion, and claim the right of worship which arises thence, it must always be granted; but still with this proviso, as was said before, that none of these pretences to divine revelation, none of these peculiar forms or practices, to which men profess to be bound by their consciences, be inconsistent with the peace of the state, the welfare of their neighbours, and the support of the civil government: For it is not to be supposed that the great God would ever reveal and appoint any thing to be believed or practised as a matter of religion, by creatures who must dwell under some civil government, which should be inconsistent with civil government itself or the common and social welfare of of mankind.

For this very reason it is that no religion hath a right to be tolerated which professes and maintains the persecution of other religions, or which binds down persons under penalties to act in the things of God contrary to their consciences; because this is injurious to mankind in general, and invades the just and natural liberties of men, and thereby breaks in upon the peace of the state.

And for the same reason no person, whatsoever religion he professes, can claim toleration for himself in the practice of it, who asserts and maintains a right to persecute other religions besides his own: Such a person is a common nuisance to a state, for his principles are inconsistent with the peace of civil society: And besides, what reason can he have to claim that toleration for himself which he refuses to others?

V. Where particular persons of the same religion shall unite in societies for religious purposes, with this proviso of the safety of the state, there the state has not only no right nor authority to forbid them, but the rulers of the state are obliged to guard and protect them from insults and injuries in the enjoyment of all their natural liberties and these inviolable rights of conscience; and they are obliged by their  
office



office to maintain these rights of their people, in opposition to all the public scandal and outrage with which persons of different religions might be tempted to treat each other: For all magistrates are guardians of the peace of the state, and of all the natural rights and liberties of mankind, in things relating to God or man. The great rule is happily expressed by our Saviour, *Matth. xxii. 21.* "Render to *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsar's*, and to God the things that are God's." The peace of the state, and it's civil welfare belongs to *Cæsar*, and he is to be honoured and supported by proper tribute for this purpose; but conscience belongs only to God, and no *Cæsar* on earth hath any right to invade it.

VI. Nor has any civil ruler whatsoever any right to require or command the people to profess and practise that peculiar religion which he himself professes, under any penalties, because the peculiarities of this or of any other sect of religion are not necessary for the good of the state. A man may be in all respects as useful and valuable a member and supporter of the state, though he profess and practise such a peculiar religion as is very different from what the rulers profess or practise, and in some respects, perhaps contrary to it.

VII. Whatsoever sects or societies of men agree together in any of these supposed revealed religions, or any religious ceremonies, forms or practices, which their consciences think necessary, they must agree also upon particular times and places for their peculiar exercises of public worship; and they must support and maintain the expences of them out of their own personal property, or at their own charge.

VIII. But that the state may take no umbrage or suspicion, at the religious assemblies of persons who differ from the religion of the rulers, as though they were designed for seditious purposes; and that every person may secure his full freedom to exercise his own peculiar religion according to his conscience without disturbance, it may be proper, if not necessary, that wheresoever ten or twelve or twenty persons, more or less, shall agree upon such a special or peculiar religion, and fix a place for their worship, they shall give notice of it to some public magistrate or public court, and let their religion and their place be registered under some particular name which they shall chuse for themselves.

Mr. *Locke* is so much of this mind in two or three articles of his laws drawn up for *Carolina* \*, that he hardly thinks any person fit for the protection of the state and all the civil privileges thereof, if his name be not registered at seventeen years of age in some one or other worshipping society; I beg leave indeed to query, whether seventeen years are an age of sufficient discretion for every young person to determine that point. Perhaps the age of one and twenty may be early enough.

IX. As places must be agreed upon for social worship, so also must the time. Now suppose the time which some particular sects agree upon for their exercises of religion are believed by them to be made sacred for worshipping by divine appointment, such as *friday* of the *turks*, *saturday* of the *jews*, and *sunday* of the christians; and suppose these very days or part of these days should be appointed by the state for some civil purposes; as for instance, if in a heathen or a *turkish* government the people should be required to appear at a public market, or at a court of justice for witnesses or jury-men, or for a public taxation, or for exercise of the militia on a *saturday* or *sunday*, surely I think the state could not be censured and made criminal for appointing such a day for these purposes, unless they did it on purpose to distress any of their subjects.

\* These few articles are the only things I consulted while I was drawing up this essay.

subjects \*. But what must a *jew* or a christian do in such a case? Or what penalties may the state enact for the neglect of obedience to this law? I answer in the first place,

X. Answer I. That if the thing required be an action really and plainly necessary for the present and immediate welfare and preservation of the state or country, the *jew* or the christian might innocently comply with the call of the state in a christian or in a *jewish* country, and then it is certainly lawful to do the same in *Turkey*; as for instance, the repelling of an invasion, the stopping of a general inundation, the quenching of fire, and the preservation of lives from imminent destruction. This is allowed on all hands, and is not esteemed a criminal profanation of sacred time.

XI. Answer II. But if the scrupulous subjects see no such necessity in the case, for the preservation of the state or the welfare and lives of men, or if the state command such actions as may be really necessary in themselves; but which are not necessary at that particular time, and which in their opinion would criminally profane the days that the *jews* or christians call holy; then it seems proper and necessary that the *jew* should preserve his *saturday* as well as the christian his *sunday* sacred for rest and divine worship, as preferring "obedience to God rather than men:" And I think he must consequently submit to such penalties as the state thinks necessary for the public welfare. I see not how this can be avoided. The state must be the judge.

XII. The state therefore in such cases, as I said before, ought to enjoin no other penalty for such neglects, than a wise and tender father would impose upon a child who loves and honours him, when he is constrained to neglect some part of his father's commands in order to obey God and his conscience: And the penalty or forfeit of each man for neglect in such a case must necessarily be small, when it is measured by and adjusted to the detriment which it is supposed the state may receive from each single person's absence or neglect of the required hour and civil service appointed by the state. Or if the penalty should be reduced a little below the detriment the state can be supposed to sustain by the neglect, I think it would not be amiss, since it is an expression of tenderness to the consciences of good men, who are in all respects faithful and obedient to the state.

XIII. Answer III. And after all, every private person must be left to his own conscience, to judge or determine how far the action required by the state would profane the day which he calls sacred, and whether God calls him to comply with the orders of state, or to refuse it, and submit to the penalty: Always supposing that the christian should not entirely neglect the public worship of God on a *sunday* nor the *jew* on a *saturday*; but as far as possible, should chuse those hours for the worship of God, which are best suited to the conveniency of the state and the general ease of those of his own sect: Nor do I think in such cases God would be found a rigorous or hard master.

XIV. And perhaps this may be one reason why the institution of the christian sabbath or *sunday*, is not so plain and express in the new testament, nor the rules of the

\* I think the state could not be made criminal for appointing such a day for civil affairs, which some or other of their subjects may count sacred, unless they did it on purpose to distress their people, because there may be seven religions professed among all the numerous inhabitants of a land, and each of these may claim a distinct day of the week as sacred: What, must these civil affairs then have no one day appointed for the transaction of them, because every day that could be named would interfere with the professions or pretences of some sect or other.



tion of it so evident, nor so strict and particular as the sabbath of the *Jews*: viz. because the church of *Christ* being to be raised up in all nations, the consciences of young christians might be put under too severe a bondage in some places, where the demands of the state might greatly interfere with the religion of the *sunday*; especially if the peculiar obligations to keep the day were so very strict, and the prohibitions were so severe as was enjoined to the *Jews*.

XV. Yet still I think it must be granted, if we would keep up any serious sense of religion and the returns of public worship, one day in seven is little enough in general to be devoted to that purpose, which both the *jews* and christians believe to be divinely appointed.

XVI. As for the times and places of public worship in general, the magistrate has certainly so much to do in them, as not to suffer assemblies under pretence of religion, to meet in such places and at such times, as may give any just and reasonable umbrage to the state, that sedition or gross immoralities are practised there.

And if any society should think fit to keep their assemblies in caves, and lurking holes at midnight, the magistrate may always demand an officer to be present with such assemblies, to take care that the state receive no damage, and that morality and peace be preserved in the state: Or perhaps he may generally suppress such meetings, in such places and seasons, where there is just and evident reason for suspicion of such wicked practices, notwithstanding all pretences of conscience: For I am persuaded the great God, the author of all civil society and government, will never require any such sort of worship, nor at such times or places, as shall endanger the peace and welfare of cities and nations.

Let but rulers allow such liberty for worship, as God and nature demand, there will be no ground for any body to seek such places or times for social worship, as can give just umbrage to any state or government.

## S E C T I O N VIII.

### *Of a particular religion professed by the ruling powers.*

I. **A**NOTHER question arises here. If the supreme power of the state or civil government professes some particular revealed religion, or worships the great God with some peculiar modes and ceremonies of it's own, may not the rulers of the state authorise and appoint men to be public teachers of their own religion in all the forms and ceremonies thereof? And may not these men celebrate these ceremonies by public authority, and lead others into the worship of their God according to these special forms and ceremonies? And may not the rulers appoint these teachers or priests to be paid out of the public revenue, or by tithes, &c. that is, tenths or twelfths of the improvement of the land, or by any taxes imposed by the government? To this I answer,

II. Answer. That every governor, every teacher, and every single person seems to have a natural right and liberty not only to practise their own religion themselves, but to persuade as many as they can to worship the God they worship, and that in and by their own approved forms. If duty to God should not require it, benevolence and love to our neighbours will incline men to this: But we must attempt it so far only as reason and persuasion can prevail, without any compulsion or force, for conscience

science and religion must be ever free: Whatsoever is done by mere compulsion or terror of men is not hearty and voluntary, and therefore it is not religion, and can never be pleasing to the great God.

III. But I cannot yet see any sufficient reason why a state should appoint the peculiarities of any revealed religion, or the special rites and ceremonies of any particular worshippers, or the men who celebrate them to be supported at the public charge: For these peculiarities are not necessary to the preservation of the state, nor to the common outward civil welfare of a people; and I think the power of the magistrate reaches no further.

Nor will I venture to say that taxes or tenths, or twelfths, or any subsidy should be raised by the state for any other end, than the civil welfare of the state requires. If a heathen prince impose a tenth penny on all his subjects, as a tax to maintain heathen worship, would a christian willingly pay it, and think himself bound in conscience to do it?

Is not this evidently the reason, why the people called *quakers* in our nation at home or abroad, refuse to pay the tithes to the clergy of the church of *England*, or of other christian churches, because they preach and practise many things in religion which the *quakers* do not believe, which the light of nature and reason does not dictate, and which are not necessary to the outward and civil welfare of mankind\*.

IV. But it may be further enquired here, may not those teachers or publishers of the civil laws, or the moral duties of natural religion, which are before allowed to be paid out of the civil list, that is, by taxes on the people; I say, may not these men take an opportunity, when the people are met to hear civil and moral lectures, at the same time to instruct the people in the knowledge of the peculiar religion of their governors, and exhort them to comply with the rites and ceremonies thereof, and to join with them in their practice? To this I answer as before,

V. Answer. That it does not appear plain to me that taxes of any kind should ever be imposed on the people, in order to encourage and maintain the peculiar ceremonies or sacrifices, preachings or ministrations of any supposed revealed religion beyond what is natural, or what is necessary for the state. Such taxes may perhaps, with as much justice be imposed to maintain, any other expensive or curious and capricious humours of a prince, which have no relation to the civil welfare or to religion.

And besides, this imposition of such a tax might give a disgust to some of the people, who profess a very different religion, and hinder or discourage them from coming to hear the laws of the land, and lectures of moral virtue, which the state requires to be published and taught at that time and in that place. Would not a christian subject under a pagan or *mabometan* prince, think it hard to be required to hear lectures of the *alcaron*, and of *Mabomet's* follies, or of the reveries of the heathen priests and poets, of *Mars*, *Bacchus*, *Apollo*, *Diana*, &c. from week to week, instead of moral or civil laws? And perhaps their consciences might be much offended

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\* I do not by any means here pretend to vindicate the refusal of tithes and dues to the church in our nation; for they are to be considered as a civil or national tax or incumbrance, belonging to every piece of land or house bought or rented, and so appointed by our laws: And therefore every man knowingly buys or hires his land or his house with this incumbrance fixed on it, and belonging to those whom the state appoints to receive and possess it. But in the first fixing or erecting a civil government, of which I am speaking throughout this essay, one would not chuse to have such laws made, or such taxes or incumbrances established at first, which would afford any colour and occasion, for such a refusal or disobedience in times to come, as may arise from real scruples of conscience.



at it, and they might be tempted to neglect their attendance on, and acquaintance with the civil and moral laws, if they are mingled in the same lecture with *alcorans* and *talmuds*, and *Homer's* hymns to the rabble of heathen gods.

VI. Yet I think this may be allowed, that at the end of the moral or civil lectures the magistrate, when an assembly is gathered, may appoint the lectures, or exercises or celebrations of his own peculiar religion to follow them, provided the people have notice of it, and as many as please are permitted to depart without penalty or reproach: And provided always the preacher is not paid out of the public money, for any thing he does over and above these moral or civil lectures, which are needful for the good of the state.

VII. And it is certain, this further allowance may be made, viz. that as any rich man may at his own private expence, or out of his own property maintain poets, philosophers, singers, teachers or priests, to preach and practise the doctrines and ceremonies of his own peculiar religion, provided they teach and act nothing inconsistent with the welfare of the state; so a prince or supreme power, may maintain teachers of the mathematics, philosophers, poets, stargazers, or priests and preachers of his religion, out of that part of his possession or revenue which is properly his own, or his personal property, and is designed for the support of himself and family and common equipage, even though it may be allotted him by the state or the laws of the land.

For if there ought to be a toleration of all religions which interfere not with the good of the state, and private persons may support the teachers and priests of their own religion out of their own property, I see no sufficient reason why the supreme power, or the governor should be debarred from the same privilege; and as he is supposed to be richer than any of the people, so he may maintain more priests or preachers of his own religion than others can.

And this practice might be so managed by the governing powers of any nation, if they are christian, and truly zealous for their religion and their Saviour, that would not in the least break in upon human liberty, and yet might give very great countenance and encouragement to christianity, and assist in spreading it through all the nation by degrees; or indeed any other religion for which the ruling powers are zealous.

I add also, that a religion thus professed and practised, and supported, by the beneficence of a prince or supreme powers, may be in some sense called an established religion, because it is supported by the rulers above and beyond any other form of religion.

VIII. But suppose the supreme and legislative powers of any state, should join the revenue or taxes, which they raise for the public support of government, with that revenue which they allow the prince for his private or domestic expence and his royal equipage, so that they are not distinguished: Has not the prince then a much larger power in his hands to promote his own peculiar religion by money, whether it be pagan, *turkish*, or christian? So far as I can see, it may be answered thus.

IX. Answer. Surely the legislative powers by mingling the revenues for the support of the government, with that of the domestic expence and equipage of the prince's family and court, have put it very much into the power and will of the prince, to lay out more or less money yearly for the maintenance and honour of his person, his court and his family as he shall see fit; always provided that the welfare and honour and offices of the state suffer no detriment, but have a full allowance made for them.

In the same manner we may reason about the expences employed in buildings, paintings, mathematic sciences or any of his own curiosities, or for the support of his own peculiar religion. If he maintain the necessary officers of the state in proper dignity, and keep up the necessary honours of his own court and household, as the dignity of his post requires, he has a liberty to save more money by prudence and thriftiness for any lawful diversions, or buildings, or philosophical experiments, or the practice and propagation of his own religion, &c. I say, he may save so much more of his revenue for such purposes and practices, than if these civil expences were distinctly settled and limited by distinct parts of the revenue appropriated to each.

X. But if many of the people should be of a different sect, and should find that the prince saves and withholds too much money from the uses of the state and his public honour, and that he expends too much upon the practice and propagation of a religion which they disapprove, it is possible they may grow uneasy and murmur at the largeness of their taxes imposed on them, which they daily observe to be spent, not in civil government, but in propagating a disagreeable religion: And in this case every such prince must be left to his own prudence, to judge how far his zeal to promote any peculiar religion, by such large and constant expences, should be indulged to the dissatisfaction of his subjects.

## S E C T I O N IX.

*Of a religion established among the rulers and officers of the state.*

I. **A**FTER all our enquiries we have not hitherto found any one religion, whether natural or revealed, or pretending to revelation, which can be authoritatively established by the state through all the nation, and by that authority can justly demand or require the attendance and compliance of all the people under any penalty. Let us see then whether some one religion may not be established among all the ruling powers, and demand the attendance of the supreme and subordinate magistrates and officers of the land, and this would be some sort of established religion.

II. I enquire here then in the first place, whether the supreme power or powers or legislators of the state may not make laws, which shall constitute and require the religion which he or they profess, to be practised by all who are admitted to the civil and military offices thereof; and whether such a law may not rightfully exclude all persons who refuse to comply with this religion.

Some are entirely of this opinion; and the reason given for it is this; surely every master in a family may refuse to take any servant who is not qualified as he requires; as for instance, one who does not believe the bible, one who cannot speak *french* or *dutch*, one who is not willing to wear his livery, or who scruples to take an oath. Here is no injury done to any person whatsoever; for no man has a right to come into another man's house or family, and be made his servant, or to enjoy any post in his household, but by his appointment or order. Now military and civil officers in the state are but as servants in a great family; and no hurt is done to any subject in their natural or civil rights or properties, if they are constantly continued as subjects under the protection of the ruling powers, though they are not made officers or rulers in the state, because they have no right to it. To this enquiry I would make the following answers.

III. Answer I.



III. Answer I. It is granted that a master of a family has a right to take or exclude what persons he thinks proper for the service and welfare of his own private house, for they were not members of his family before they were taken into it: So the ruling power may chuse what persons and what officers he pleases for his own household, his personal affairs, his guards, and his own public equipage and honour, without any injury done to other persons, who never had any pretence, by station or merit, to be received into the royal household or the guards, as a part or member thereof. But the officers of a state, or magistrates of the country, stand in a very different character from the servants in a family, because every subject is already a member of the state, and if he has behaved well therein, he should at least stand capable of the preferments and offices of his own country, as what he has merited by his good character and behaviour, as a subject in that state of which he is a part or member: Nor is it reasonable or just, that a capacity of preferment should be taken from him by law, but for some civil crime or misdemeanor, because such an incapacity fixed by law, is a public reproach or civil punishment. I answer in the second place,

IV. Answer II. That it is possible the supreme ruling power, may at present profess a different religion from almost all the people, or may fall into such different sentiments, and then surely it doth not seem to be reasonable or fair to confine all inferior magistrates or officers to the religion of the supreme ruler, and to forbid the people ever to have any ruling officer among them, who is of their own religion, or to bind down all the officers, who must keep the people under due regulation and observance of the laws, to a peculiar religion which the bulk of the people dislike, and perhaps abhor. Would not this universal separation and opposition of religions, probably beget such a strangeness and ill-will between the rulers and the ruled, as might in a great measure endanger those bonds of union and love, and mutual good offices, which should be always reciprocally maintained between the rulers and the ruled? Would it not tend to provoke the people to sedition, and can it be ever esteemed true policy to follow such a conduct, as would bring such undesirable and dangerous consequences with it? I answer thirdly,

V. Answer III. By way of concession. When the supreme ruling powers and far the greatest part of the people are of one and the same religion, I think it cannot be unlawful, nor is it improper for them generally to chuse the subordinate ruling officers out of those persons who are of the same religion with the prince and the people: And while things continue so, there may seem to be good reasons for this conduct in the present disposition of human affairs. It may help to secure and establish union and love, and unanimity and mutual respect, between the rulers and ruled in any government: Which is of great importance to the welfare of the state.

But if there be a very considerable number of the people professing any other religion, I query whether it can be political wisdom to exclude them from every public office absolutely and universally without exception? And it may be another query whether it be an instance of wise conduct in any such nation, to make a law which shall incapacitate a man to be an officer in the state, merely because he professes a different religion; which difference in truth, hath nothing to do with civil government? Or can it be proper, to put such a man under a perpetual disability by the sentence of a law, who is wise and good, who is strictly faithful to the state, who is acceptable to the people, and hath great personal merit and fitness, to supply a vacant post of profit or honour?

And

And it may be said yet further, that in some constitutions of government, the towns and cities and particular districts and divisions, may have a right to chuse their own officers; and must a man of such an excellent character as I have described, and who is much desired by all the inhabitants, be rendered useless in government, merely because his conscience obliges him to worship God in another manner than the prince does? And should the people be for ever deprived of their ancient right to chuse such a person into office, and enjoy the benefit of his talents and virtues?

However it is evident, that if a particular religion be professed by the people and their governors both supreme and subordinate, it may be well enough called the national religion, since the greatest part of the nation profess the same religion with the supreme power in it, and generally all the subordinate powers profess it also; though if it be not established under any legal requirements and penalties, some persons may doubt, whether it can be so well pronounced an established religion in the full propriety of the words. In the fourth place I answer,

VI. Answer IV. Suppose a whole nation, both rulers and people should agree in the present age so far, as actually to have no magistrates or officers supreme or subordinate, chosen or appointed, but who profess such a peculiar religion as they themselves profess; yet considering that we are all fallible creatures, and that our knowledge is very imperfect, and our opinions are very changeable, considering also that the changes and revolutions of human affairs, and the situation of them are very various, I query whether it be a piece of wisdom in any state, to make such laws like the *medes* and *persians*, which shall never be altered in all times to come. Who knows what future occurrences may arise, wherein it may be necessary for a state to do that in one age for its own preservation and advantage, which was not proper in former years? And who knows, what further views may arise in the minds of the ruling powers through longer observation and experience, which may shew them how reasonable it is to repeal laws that have been formerly made, though at that time, they might generally be thought necessary. Surely it can be no piece of wisdom for a person or a family or a kingdom, by any present resolution or law to preclude themselves and their posterity for ever from all possible advantages that might arise from the change or repeal of it in future times. In the last place,

VII. Answer V. I would make the supposition, that the present religion both of prince and people is heathen idolatry, and then I would make these few queries following. viz.

Query I. If such a law had been made in every nation in the days of heathenism, to exclude all but heathens and idolaters from public posts, I query whether the government of all the *european* as well as eastern nations, must not have continued for ever heathen? And whether any secular power or government in *Europe*, could ever have regularly become christian? Now surely it would be hard to say, that that could have been an equitable law which should for ever exclude a christian prince from the throne in every nation of *Europe*, and forbid christian officers ever to have been established amongst them.

Query II. Whether the understanding and conscience of prince or people who made such a law, might not in time gain further light and knowledge, so as actually to cast off their old heathen religion, since the light of conscience ought to be obeyed? But must every one of them lose their present civil rights by this their increase of knowledge and obedience to God and conscience? Must the prince, if he turns christian, lose all his authority, or the officers their civil or military power, merely because they have forsaken idolatry and worshipped the one true God through *Jesus Christ*?



*Christ*; still supposing, that all of them are faithful to fulfil their present posts in the state, and all their duties to it?

The absurdity of this would yet more abundantly appear, if the bulk of the people were become christians too, and longed for a christian magistrate. What must both people and prince be eternal slaves to such a law, which their ancestors made in the time of ignorance? Must a christian people for ever be obliged to have heathen magistrates because their heathen ancestors once made such a law? Surely the very light of nature teaches us that the prince and the people, may join to reverse such a law whensoever they feel the mischief and slavery that attends it; and would they be wise, to try the same experiment again, when they have once felt the inconvenience and bondage of it?

Query III. May not some excellent persons be found, who are fit for any post or office in the government, whether supreme or subordinate, who may profess the gospel of *Christ*, and thus differ from the heathen religion which is established by this law? Persons I say, whom the people themselves would wish to be their rulers and governors, and persons who by the constitution have as much right to it as any others, excepting only their peculiar religion.

In an elective government, why should the people be forbid to chuse such supreme governors among them, only because they are christians? And why should the supreme power in any kingdom or government whatsoever, be forbid to make the fittest persons he can find, officers in the army and the state, merely because they are christians? Or if particular cities or towns or counties have a right by the constitution to chuse their own magistrates or officers, why should they be hindered from enjoying the benefit of such magistrates as are supposed to be wisest and fittest, merely because they profess christianity? Can this be for the welfare of the state, which the rulers and the ruled are all bound to consult? Can it be any advantage to a state to have worse officers chosen into any post, supreme or subordinate, and to have much fitter persons rejected, and that merely because they hold some christian opinions and practices, which have nothing to do with the state any further, than to teach and incline all men in all stations to make mankind more safe and happy.

VIII. Thus far may be argued, if the religions are entirely different in the very foundations and substance of them, as the heathen and the christian. But if the religions in contest be very nearly the same, and differ only in some circumstantial, there can never be so much reason why there should be so great a difference made between them in the disposal of public offices of trust or profit; for the dangers of any kind that can arise from such promiscuous officers is not so great or formidable. This therefore in such enquiries should always come into the consideration.

IX. But after all, if in any nation a great majority of the people together with the supreme rulers, be of one religion or one sect, and several other sects of the same religion are dispersed throughout the land, I cannot see any hurt in it, as I said before, if the ruling powers generally chuse and appoint persons of their own sect to be officers of the state; supposing still they do not exclude others by a law, and thereby lay a public reproach or odium upon those who have no way deserved it.

If there be a just and complete toleration of every such sect or religion, as doth not injure the public peace of the state, I do not see that the lesser sects have reason to complain, that they are not actually made rulers and officers of the state; provided always that there are no offices of burden and expence imposed upon them, while they are not called into any offices of honour or profit,

And

And if there are persons of worth and value, very fit in all respects to sustain public offices, and yet are of a different religion or different sect from the chief rulers and the bulk of the people, I think it must be determined by the wisdom of the rulers to judge where the superior balance lies, between the advantages arising from the good qualifications of the person, and the dangers which may arise from the difference of his religion; and accordingly they must determine whether it be fit to entrust him with any such public office or no, to which he has no claim by nature or by law.

Here an objection will arise from this concession, viz.

Objection. If the supreme rulers should judge, that the superior balance of wisdom lies in guarding against the danger of persons of a different religion constantly, why may not this be expressed and confirmed by a law, which is but the constant and final determination of the supreme rulers? But I answer as before,

Answer I. That, perhaps, it would not be just by a law, to lay any mark of infamy, any public odium or civil incapacity on persons, merely on account of their religion, where in all other respects they deserve well of the state. Besides,

Answer II. The present determination of any supreme ruler not to make such or such a man an officer or magistrate, because of the rulers jealousy of his religion, reaches but to the present time and the present situation of affairs, and this will answer all the just and reasonable purposes of a supreme ruler: But to establish such a law, lays a long and constant odium, or public reproach as well as incapacity, on that whole sect or party for time to come, when it may be the best interest of the state to have that very officer, or a magistrate of that religion, chosen or fixed in such a station. See section ix. paragraph 6. And,

Answer III. I enquire, whether in many cases this would not be found direct persecution for conscience: If ever so worthy a man be employed for several years in a heathen country, in an office of honour or profit, or both, and he be convinced and professes christianity, would not such a law, which excludes christians from all offices, turn him out of his place and livelihood, and perhaps leave him and his family to starve? The same case may happen, where any law is made to exclude any different sects of the same religion from all offices.

X. Yet in order to secure the peace and welfare of the state, and the common good of mankind, which is the great end of government, I would here venture to enquire whether there are not two sorts of persons, who may be constantly and rightfully excluded even by a law, from any supreme or subordinate offices in the state, and that merely upon the account of their religion or some wicked articles in it.

XI. First, When the religion which any person professes, contains such pernicious articles in it, and especially if it has been frequently attended with such correspondent practices from time to time, as give abundant evidence and example that the principles of that religion, encourage and authorize men to invade the peace of the state, the rights of the prince, and the civil or religious liberties, the property and welfare of the people.

Thence I would take leave to enquire, whether or no the popish religion, by it's persecuting and bloody principles, as well as by it's subjection to a foreign potentate or prince even the pope of *Rome*, who pretends to absolve men from the most solemn and sacred bonds; I say, whether this *roman* religion has not made it effectually appear, that neither princes nor people can be safe wheresoever the papists



have power\*: For I take all those principles of religion which allow the deposing of kings and the persecuting of people, merely on account of religion, to be unjust in themselves, and inconsistent with the welfare of any state; and consequently I query whether any wise state should ever admit of such rulers or officers in any post whatsoever of high or low degree, unless they can first clear themselves from these wicked principles. In the second place,

XII. Secondly, I enquire whether persons, whose religion will not permit them to give effectual security of their allegiance to their superiors in the government, or security to the people of their protection, I say, whether persons of such a religion as indulges men in the violation of all such bonds of security, can be safely admitted to be supreme or subordinate officers in any state: For such officers cannot faithfully stipulate or contract with their prince to serve him; nor can rulers or princes of such a religion stipulate with their people to be faithful in their office: Nor do I see any way how such a religion can effectually secure the distinct rights either of people or prince, unless this part of it be absolutely and effectually renounced.

XIII. And indeed, as I have hinted before, such persons among the people who cannot engage by bonds laid upon conscience for their allegiance and faithfulness to any civil government, or who think their religion allows them to break those bonds for the sake of their religion, I do not see how they can claim common protection under any state or government whatsoever; and therefore I think with more abundant evidence, they may be very rightfully excluded by a law from any office therein. And we may be well assured that that religion can never be from God which allows no secure stipulation between prince and people; that is in short, which allows no mutual security in civil government, which in general is an ordinance of God for the good of mankind.

## S E C T I O N X.

### *Of the power of the prince in every worshipping assembly.*

I. **T**HOUGH the supreme power of any state, has no right to impose the profession or practice of any one peculiar religion upon the people, yet since civil government is an ordinance of God as the God of nature for the welfare of mankind, the supreme power in any nation may possibly have a right to command several things to be done in every assembly that meets for divine worship: As,

II. 1. I think they may give it in charge to every religious society, as they are members of the state, that sometimes at least, and upon proper occasions they should preach up moral duties to men, as well as the duties of piety towards God; that they should teach men to be honest and faithful, to be kind and compassionate, to be sober and temperate, and to be dutiful to their civil governors in all those things which

\* Let it be observed here, that this scheme does not allow any prince or state to persecute the papists in the least degree on the account of their worshipping images, or making a piece of bread their God, and adoring it as the body of *Jesus Christ*; nor for any fooleries or idolatries in their religion, which do not injure the public welfare in things natural or civil. Not a farthing of their money, nor a hair of their head should be taken away on this account. But if they will profess and maintain such opinions and principles about the powers of a priest or a pope to absolve them of their oaths, and to break all their bands of duty to the civil government, and to their fellow-subjects, I see not how they can claim any protection from the state, much less an admission into any post of trust or profit, as appears in the next paragraphs.

the civil powers have a right to demand; and that they should preach against personal and social vices, as slander, theft, adultery, drunkenness, quarrelling, murder, cruelty, cheating, faction, sedition, tumult, rebellion, and the raising animosities and disturbances in the state: Especially where the magistrates, as *St. Paul* expresses it, "are not a terror to good works but to the evil, and are the ministers of God for good." This is the design of *St. Paul's* advice, *Rom. xiii. 1—7*. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.—Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God:—For rulers are not a terror to good works but to the evil.—Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, that is, for fear of punishment, but also for conscience-sake. For, for this cause pay you tribute also." And he repeats such kind of advice to *Titus* the preacher. *Tit. iii. 1, 2*.—"Put them in mind, to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man," &c.

All these things being necessary to preserve the civil government and the state in welfare and peace, as well as necessary and essential parts of all the religions that are good for any thing in the world, I think it may lie within the province of the supreme power to require that the people in their religious assemblies, among other lessons, should be instructed in these matters at convenient seasons.

III. 2. I think the supreme power may require also that amongst the addresses or prayers for temporal blessings which are offered up to their God by any societies of men, there should be some petitions put up for the welfare of the government: Surely every man should pray for a spirit of wisdom and justice, and mercy, and the best of divine blessings upon their rulers. This is the instruction of the apostle to all christians, though it was supposed they lived then under heathen governments. *1 Tim. ii. 1*. "I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings and all that are in authority, that under them we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

IV. 3. If magistrates may require every religious assembly, meeting for instruction and prayer, to have lessons of moral duty and allegiance taught them, and to have prayers offered up for the governors in times of prosperity and peace, may they not also when any calamity or danger attends the state or nation, by war, famine, pestilence, tumults, &c. I say, may they not at such seasons appoint a certain day or hours of the day for worshipping assemblies, each to address their God in a way of prayer\*, that these dangers may be prevented, or these calamities removed? Such a civil appointment does not so much as pretend to make the day sacred, and I think it cannot be reasonably scrupled by persons of any religion upon that account.

V. I have turned this question on all sides in my thoughts, and I cannot at present see any criminal imposition upon conscience in such demands of the government: For if the day which happens to be appointed by the magistrate for such a purpose, is held sacred by any religious party in the land, yet surely prayers for the welfare of the state and the nation can never be sinfully offered up upon such a sacred day, that is, it can be no profanation of the day to make such addresses to God. And on the other hand, if the day be not held sacred, the hours appointed to this service are not to be supposed to ingross so much time as to hinder them from the businesses of the

civil

\* Left it should be objected here, that no magistrate may appoint idolaters on any day to worship idols or false gods, I would say, that the form of the proclamation or public command, should only in general express the worship of God, which if any heathen subjects apply to false gods, the magistrate is not to blame, in my opinion.



civil life, beyond what is required by the necessities of the state, or the obligation of the people to promote the public welfare.

VI. And if seasons of prayer may be commanded by the government in cases of public calamity or danger, we may by the same reason conclude also, that seasons of public thanksgiving may be appointed upon any national occasion of returning thanks for public health, peace, and plenty, or special deliverance from distress or danger : Always provided that every religious assembly be permitted to worship their God in their own way and manner on such appointed seasons ; for those actions of thanksgiving seem to be a part of natural social religion, in which the welfare of the state is concerned.

Perhaps it will be objected here, that by this rule our king *James* the second, might appoint a day of prayer against king *William*, or the prince of *Orange*, when he came really for the deliverance of the nation from tyranny ; or he might appoint a thanksgiving for the birth of the spurious prince of *Wales* or the pretender ; for princes will make themselves judges when occurrences are national dangers or benefits.

Answer. Where such things happen, every single person must be a judge of his own actions according to conscience, and must never trifle with God to obey the commands of a king ; nor will the commands of a king lay any obligations on conscience in such cases, where it is dubious on which side the true welfare of the nation stands. But in all cases where the danger or the benefit of a nation is most apparent and certain, and universally agreed, I think a prince may require the religious assistance of the people for the civil welfare.

VII. And perhaps it may not be unlawful, for the civil power to lay some small penalty upon those, who without just excuse wilfully and rebelliously oppose or renounce any such religious services for the state, that is, in cases of most apparent danger or blessing : And perhaps a heavier penalty may be appointed for such obstinate and stubborn spirits, as will boldly transact any thing in public, in such a way of sport or labour, &c. which will be a manifest and public hinderance to the sacred offices required by the magistrate, on the days appointed for public prayer or thankfulness.

We find the king of *Nineveh*, who was a heathen, was led by the light of nature to appoint, in a very strict manner, such a day of humiliation and prayer throughout the city, when they were in imminent danger of destruction under the threatenings of God, by the mouth of *Jonah* his prophet, *Jonah* iii. 5 — 10. And as the light of nature and reason seem to dictate it, so the success of it was agreeable to their desires, and the threatened desolation was prevented.

Whether the king had a right to command the ceremonies of sackcloth and ashes indeed may bear a dispute : But so far as I can see, their “crying mightily unto their god,” on some appointed day, might be a very lawful and proper command from their king, as a father and protector of the people, and I should think the people might be bound to obey it.

But still, as I said before, it must be in such cases, only, where they are satisfied the true interest and welfare of the nation demands it. In dubious cases every man must have leave to judge for himself, and no man's conscience should be bound to pray for those things which he believes in his heart to be a public grievance or danger, or to pray against what he believes to be a public blessing, however the civil powers may enjoin or require it.

VIII. Here

VIII. Here then it will be said, if the magistrate may forbid any thing that gives public interruption to the solemnity of such national fasting or thanksgiving days by laws and penalties, in evident cases of national dangers or blessings, or may he not by laws and penalties forbid also the common labours or sports of men on those days, which he himself believes sacred to God and religion?

This argument may be further enforced thus: In a christian country, where prince and people are chiefly christians, may not the prince forbid all his subjects, whether christians or pagans, *turks* or *jews*, to labour or sport publicly on the first day of the week, since it is manifest that the indulgence of such sports or labours on that day would be an offence and a snare to the christians, a means of corrupting their children and families, &c. and hinder them in the learning or the celebration of the christian religion? To answer this question impartially,

IX. Answer. Let us turn the tables, and suppose the ruling powers, and the greatest part of the people to be *mabometans*; and then enquire, whether they may not command every person of what religion soever, to abstain from all public sports and labours on a *friday*, because it is manifest that the indulgence of them would be an offence to *mabometans*, and a means of hindering their children and families from the learning or celebration of some parts of the *mabometan* worship. If this be allowed, it is certain, whatsoever a *mabometan* prince has a right to do in his own country, a christian prince has a right to do the same in his.

But unless this prohibition of public sports and labours on any certain day, can be reasonably construed to the natural and civil welfare of the state or the people, it may be doubted whether any prince, either heathen, christian, or *mabometan*, has a right to forbid any of his people to get their livelihood by public labour one day in a week, merely because it is accounted religious and sacred, by him and the greatest part of his subjects. I say, this may be doubted and would bear a dispute, nor will I pretend to determine here absolutely on this argument.

X. Therefore I add further: God himself when he was king of the *Jews*, or their civil ruler, appointed one day in seven, that is, *saturday* or their sabbath, as a proper season for the natural rest and repose of animals, both of man and beast, as well as for his own worship in public assemblies, and that under severe penalties; and the stranger within the gates was obliged to submit to it.

It is true, the great God well knew that one day in seven was the most proper and just proportion of time for the rest and repose of animal nature, and for the celebration of public religion: And therefore princes and states who know this, should appoint the same proportion. But since God as the king of the *jews*, appointed this seventh day, there seems to be some reason for us to say, that even princes who know not this divine appointment, may assume this authority to require their subjects to devote one day in seven, or ten, or twelve to the rest and repose of nature, for the God of nature has informed us by the fourth commandment, this is for the good of the people: And the prince may forbid, at least, all public labours on that day, and public diversions too, that all his subjects may have leisure, and may be encouraged to maintain and practise some religion, and to pay some public worship to their God without interruption or molestation. This seems also to be needful for the civil interest of the state or the whole people, as has been proved before.

But as this day was *saturday* when God was the king of the *Jews*, so in a *mabometan* country this day will be *friday*; in a christian nation it will be *sunday*; in heathen nations perhaps other days would be appointed, and it is impossible in this case to gratify every religious sect or party in a nation.

XI. Now



XI. Now if any weekly day whatsoever, be devoted to natural rest or to the worship of a god in a country, as it serves the natural or civil interest of mankind, surely that very day seems most proper which the bulk of the people shall chuse, and especially if both the rulers and the majority of the people agree in the same; even though the reason of their agreement is because they think it sacred to religion: Nor have the lesser sects or parties any reason to complain, that for the general good they are forbid public labours or sports one day in a week. Upon this foot I think the penal prohibition of public sports, labour or traffick on *sundays* in a christian country may be vindicated.

But if any particular sects think other days more sacred than those which are appointed by the government, they should never be constrained to work or labour on those days, except the necessity of the state require it, as I have before shewn.

XII. These are some of the powers, which I think a prince or a ruler may lay claim to in every religious society. And perhaps there may be yet a further right that the supreme civil power may have in religious societies, viz. wheresoever there is any colour or ground for suspicion that the members of these societies are doing any thing to the detriment of the public peace, there the prince may require the presence of some civil officer to inspect and see that nothing be done contrary to the welfare of the state: Always requiring at the same time that this officer make no manner of disturbance in the religious practices of this society, where the offices of the civil government are not invaded, nor the public peace injured. If the prince has a right to do this in any other societies, where he has reason to suspect sedition, why may he not do it in religious societies also?

XIII. There are some other instances of power in things sacred which princes have claimed; and even some of the best of our former writers in speaking of these matters, have allowed more power to civil governors in such points, then either reason or scripture will support. They have permitted princes to call and dismiss or conclude synods for settling religious controversies, to direct their meetings and to preside over them; some have authorized them to adjust what crimes shall be subjected to church-censures, and what not, as well as to execute those censures: They have given them power to determine circumstances in divine worship and to regulate all things of outward mode, form and ceremony, relating to order and decency, &c. But I can find no sufficient ground to justify these pretences either in reason or scripture\*.

XIV. I know it will be objected here, that those few rights and powers, which I have allowed to princes and states, do not arise to the notion of an established church: But in every nation, there must be some establishment of religion, say they, there must be some national church, or settled worship appointed by the state, without which religion cannot subsist.

Answer. No particular religion or worship can be fully established by civil powers without some sort of penalties, on those people or officers who comply not with it; and

\* That excellent writer baron *Puffendorf* has fallen into these few mistakes, in that valuable little discourse of his concerning "the relation between church and state; or how far the christian and civil life affect each other:" Which was translated with an excellent preface, written by Mr. *Barbeyrac*, and printed in english by *John Watts* at the rose in St. Paul's church yard 1719. These chief mistakes or faults may be found from the forty fifth to the fiftieth section. I could not comply with these opinions, when I read it many years ago: Otherwise I think it is the best book that ever I met with on this subject; and the principles on which it is written, do not only give us a happy clue for the justest sentiments in this controversy, but even contradict and overturn those very mistakes of the author, which he hath slid into for want of care and attention in those sections which are most exceptionable.

and is it not this very doctrine of the necessity of an established religion, and an established church, which has fixed so many wicked and mischievous religions throughout the world, and which hath excluded the only true religion of *Christ* and the new testament, out of most of the nations of the earth in former and later ages? And shall christian and protestant rulers, think that thing so necessary in civil government, which is liable to such horrid consequences, and which they so much complain of in all other rulers; as being highly injurious to God and men, and to the religion of the blessed *Jesus*.

XV. And I cannot but remark here, that there are many persons highly zealous for an established religion, who are ever urging the pattern of the primitive churches, and especially that of the three first centuries, as the standard and rule to which our present christianity should be reduced, in discipline and worship: They are ever informing us what a glorious thing the christian religion was in those days, how divinely the church flourished, and grew in piety and devotion, as well as in numbers, and in every spiritual grace and beauty.

We allow this account of the glory of those early churches, and the beauty of holiness, and the amazing success of the gospel which was found among them, though we cannot admit all their practices to be a perfect rule or standard of christianity, which honour belongs only to the new testament. But let those persons remember that in those three first centuries there was no such thing as a church established by law; and then let all those glories be confessed to belong to the christian church, when it had no national establishment, no royal supports, no settled revenues, no civil power to aggrandize and to adorn it: And let it be remembered too, that when it became an established church under the emperor *Constantine* and his successors, its true glory and spiritual beauty and excellence by degrees faded away, and was almost lost by the visible powers, pomp and honours attending this very establishment.

The church of *Christ* in the new testament, is built on such a foundation, that it wants nothing of civil power to support it, besides the mere protection of the state, which every christian society may require and expect in common with every other society of men, who are good subjects, and pay all due allegiance to the state in which they dwell.

## C O N C L U S I O N.

I. **T**HUS I have given a short account of my best sentiments, how far any sort of public assemblies for hearing lectures on divine, civil, or moral subjects, or the public preaching or celebration of peculiar religions, may be safely established by the state; how far some public worship may be required in general, and especially on particular occasions of the public interest of the state, and how far the people are required to pay their attendance. But I cannot find any sufficient power in the state or government to oblige the nation or particular persons in it under penalties to any form of worship. If I have in any thing exceeded the bounds of the just and reasonable rights of government, or too much limited the just and natural liberties or conscience of mankind, either princes or people, I shall be glad to be better informed in a spirit of meekness and charity, which generally attends the spirit of wisdom and truth.

II. The only maxim by which I have conducted my sentiments through all this scheme, is this, that the power of civil government reaches no further than the preservation of the natural and civil welfare, rights and properties of mankind with regard



gard to this world, and has nothing to do with religion further than this requires : But the special rights of conscience, and the things of religion, as they relate to another world, belong to God only. And the gospel of *Christ* does not pretend to erect a kingdom of this world, and therefore it alters nothing in the nature of civil government; " but leaves to *Cæsar* the things which are *Cæsar's*. *Matth.* xxii. 21.

III. There may be many things which a zealous christian ruler might think very proper to be done for the honour of his God and his Saviour in the public world, and in the management of the state; and indeed he may do much for God in reforming a sinful land; yet in the peculiarities of christianity, I find nothing that can be required or imposed by civil authority, without intrenching upon the rights or liberties of mankind: And I was not willing to indulge any thing to be imposed upon heathen subjects by christian governors, which may not also be counted reasonable and lawful for a heathen governor to impose upon christians; because the religion of *Christ* makes no change in the nature of civil power.

IV. Nor do I know how to vindicate a christian state in propagating their own religion by any such methods of compulsion or penalty, which a heathen state might not also use for the support and encouragement of their's: And therefore I cannot see it lawful for any civil power in christendom to suppress the publication of any new, strange, or foreign sects or parties in religion, where they promise and pay due allegiance to the rulers, support the government, maintain the public peace, and molest not the state: Nor do I see good reason to make any such laws, or execute any such punishments against the peaceable preachers of any sect or party, which we christians should have thought unreasonable or unlawful for the civil powers of *Athens* to have made and executed against *St. Paul*, when in the midst of a heathen nation on *Mars-hill* he preached *Jesus* and the resurrection. *Acts* xvii. 22. In all our reasonings and writings on this important subject, let us take heed to allow no such power or dominion to men, which would have excluded the best of religions, that is, the religion of *Christ* out of the world.

V. I know it has been said upon these occasions, that the christian magistrate has right to persecute or suppress the pagan religion, because it is false, whereas the pagan magistrate has no right to suppress christianity, because it is true: And though these pretences to truth may be contended on both sides, yet since one may be proved to be true and the other to be false, truth has always a right on it's side which falsehood can never have. I answer,

Answer. Every one who sets up for a persecutor, will pretend he is orthodox, and has the right on his side, and there is no common supreme court of judicature that can decide this matter, till the supreme judge of all appears in the last great day: And therefore since the pretences on either side are not sufficient to determine the justice of the persecution, or suppression of the other side, and since there is no common supreme court to which they can both appeal in this world, it follows evidently that each profession must allow liberty and toleration to the other, where the welfare of the state is secure, and brought into no danger by the practices of the inferior party. I might on this occasion, recommend a book of *Mr. Bayle's*, intitled " a philosophical commentary on *Luke* xiv. 23. compel them to come in," written in two volumes octavo, wherein after he has gone through all the controversy about persecution, he adds a supplement to prove heretics have as much right to persecute the orthodox, as the orthodox have to persecute them.

T H E

T H E  
A P P E N D I X,

Wherein, the same sentiments of just liberty are confirmed by  
a view of the origin of a christian church.

I. **T**H E foregoing discourse was begun by tracing out the origin of civil government, and thence inferring the several rights and powers of it, and enquiring how far they would reach in any of the affairs of a religious society, and particularly of a christian church.

Let us now take a short survey of the origin of christian churches, and enquire whether the setting things in this view will afford any different lights or inferences concerning the power of civil magistrates in things sacred.

II. When the christian religion was first planted, almost all the states, kingdoms and governments of this world were heathens: Even *Palestine* itself had heathen governors. The blessed apostles travelling amongst the nations, and preaching the gospel wheresoever they could find opportunity, converted multitudes of single persons to the christian faith; these united themselves in little societies by agreement, to assemble together at certain seasons, and worship God by the apostles directions through *Jesus Christ*.

III. In some of those same cities wherein christianity was preached, there were or might be also several other societies of men under the same civil government, united together by peculiar agreements among themselves for different purposes, but all subject to the rulers of the state in matters of civil government.

Let us now suppose for instance, in the city of *Corinth* there might be a "college of philosophers, a society of painters or antiquaries, a synagogue of *Jews*, an assembly of deists, and a church of christians."

IV. Each of these being voluntary societies, they have complete liberty and power to chuse their own presidents, teachers, and other officers out of their own body, as they stood in need of them, in order to regulate the affairs of their society: And they themselves contrive and agree upon rules and laws for the government of their own society, viz. upon what terms persons shall be admitted as members, for what reasons they shall be suspended for a season, or cast out utterly; what times, and places they shall meet in, what forms or ceremonies they shall use in any of their practices, what sum of money, or what utensils, or what goods, or support, or what



proportion of these things each member shall furnish or supply toward the general design of the society, and what shall be the business of every member.

These things, I say, must be agreed by the members of the society, but all in a constant consistence with the civil laws of the state, and the civil rights and liberties of every subject of it.

Note, Whosoever their original founder hath left them certain rules and directions, it is supposed they all consent to submit to them.

V. Now to apply all this to christianity. The chief and most important things in the christian society were appointed by *Christ* and his apostles, their first founders, as praying, preaching the gospel, singing, baptism, the Lord's supper, &c. Other circumstances which were not appointed by the apostles, and which yet were necessary to be determined some one way, these were probably and naturally left to be determined by the common consent and agreement of the church, for their mutual conveniency and general edification; such as, the hour of their worship, the place of their meeting, &c. As for other circumstances which were not necessary to be determined one way, such as their common habits, their gestures, &c. these were generally left indifferent to every worshipper; always provided they acted agreeably to the common light of nature and reason of things, becoming the sacred solemnity of worship, and in a consistence with the interest of the state.

I say, it seems most probable that the determination of these things was left to the public agreement of the people, or to their private liberty: But if any persons shall suppose, they were left to be determined by the rulers or officers of the church, I will not by any means debate that matter here; it is enough for my purpose, if it be acknowledged, these things were left to be agreed upon or determined by the church itself, either the people, or their officers in that society, and not by their civil governors\*.

VI. Yet still let it be remembered that the power of the state or the civil government, is supreme over all these societies and their officers, in all things which relate to the peace and welfare of the nation or the city; and none of them have any right to make any laws, agree upon any rules, or do any thing contrary to the good of the city, or the civil government.

As for instance, if the college of philosophers, profess and maintain the opinion of a public community of wives, or of exposing or murdering their children, if the synagogue of the *Jews* should refuse to give any pledges of their allegiance to heathen governors, if the christians should pretend that civil dominion is founded in divine grace, or that the saints, that is, the christians, should rise and take the city, or that no faith is to be kept with heretics; or if any of these societies should profess and maintain the right of persecuting or punishing any other society for their peculiar sentiments or practices, which affect not the state or the public good, they themselves may lawfully be sent out of the city, and be banished from the protection of the civil government, for these things are contrary to the public welfare.

Or if any of the members of any of these societies, should be guilty of crimes that are inconsistent with the peace of mankind or welfare of the state, viz. murder, drunkenness, stealing, cheating, slander, sedition, treason, &c. they may be punished

\* I have no concern here in that famous question, whether a christian church must be governed by an episcopal person, or bishop in the way of monarchy, or by a synod of presbyters in a way of aristocracy, or by the vote of the people in a way of democracy: But it is evident, that the civil powers, of what form soever they be, have no just right or authority to govern the church in things sacred.

nished by the state according to the laws of the land, without any consideration what other society they belong to, or any regard to it.

But I would proceed yet further here, and add, that if any of these societies should presume to punish any of their own members with the loss of life or limb, or seizing their property, or in any manner which is inconsistent with the peace or welfare of the state, these members so punished, or any others for them, may make complaint to the civil rulers, and these civil rulers have a right to restrain these particular societies from inflicting such punishments, and they have a right also to punish those that inflict them according to the laws of the land; for it is their proper business to see that no member of the state be injured in life, liberty or property.

Hence it follows, that these particular societies have no right or power to punish those whom their own particular laws only may call criminal, except with such small fines, inconveniencies, or dishonours as their offending members, willingly submit to, or by sharp reproofs, or by suspending them for a season from their meetings, or casting them utterly out of their society; but they have no power nor right to call in the civil arm to punish them for such sort of faults. Indeed if their crime be such as affects the common welfare of the state, or peace of mankind, they may not only be expelled out of that society in particular, by the members of it, for all such societies should suffer nothing among them contrary to the peace or welfare of the state: But they should also be cited before the civil magistrate, in order to be punished as the laws of the land direct.

And if I were to speak here peculiarly of the christian church, I would say, that it has no power to punish it's own officers or members according to scripture, for any crime whatsoever, but one of these three ways, viz. by an admonition or reproof given publicly in the church, by suspension or exclusion from the office they bore therein, or from the communion of the church for a season, or by utter exclusion of them from the church, which is called excommunication: And the civil magistrate may punish the same persons, if their crimes affect the public welfare, with death or imprisonment, or any other civil penalty which the law of the land appoints.

VII. If nothing be found in any of these societies or their members, contrary to the interests of the state or welfare of the people, then they may by their professed allegiance to the state, claim protection of the state; the rulers of the state have no proper power nor authority to hinder them from meeting in their several societies, which were instituted for different purposes, but they are bound to defend them as good subjects. Nor have magistrates any power to determine the greater or the lesser offices, rules, actions, circumstances, or any affairs relating purely to these distinct societies: They have no power to appoint the painters, who shall be their president, or when they shall meet, or what sort of pencils, or what colours they shall use; nor have the rulers of the state any right to require the philosophers to change any of their opinions, or to read *Plato*, or *Zeno*, or *Aristotle*, or to alter the course of their lectures; nor can they impose rules on the assembly of deists, when to sit, or stand, or kneel; nor should they command the *Jews* when they shall wash themselves, or what flesh they shall eat; nor impose upon the christians, who shall be their teachers, or what habits or garments they shall wear, or what gestures they shall use in their preaching or singing, or any other parts of their worship. In these things the state has no power to interpose, where the public welfare of the city or nation receives no danger or damage.



VIII. It is granted indeed, that if the necessity or welfare of any such city or state require that foreign silk shall not be worn, nor any foreign paper be used, in order to encourage a national manufacture, or that no person shall appear without a woollen garment upon them, to promote the breeding of sheep, or that veal shall not be eaten, nor calves be slain for a twelvemonth, in order to maintain a breed of cattle after a great murrain, &c. All these societies ought to submit their particular rules and their personal liberty to these laws of the state, and to comply with them as the state enjoins. But where the affairs, exigencies or benefits of the state do not require such commands or prohibitions, there these private societies and their actions are not to be modelled and determined by the mere humour, or caprice, or arbitrary will of a magistrate.

IX. Perhaps you will say, are not civil magistrates to be obeyed "in omnibus licitis & honestis," that is, "in all things that are lawful and honest?" And if magistrates require several of these particular actions or circumstances of action to be performed according to their will in these several societies, ought not the societies to obey them, provided there is nothing commanded but what is honest and lawful? To this I answer,

X. Answer. That I have read of an oath of obedience "in omnibus licitis & honestis," "in all things lawful and honest," required and imposed by ecclesiastical superiors, whether justly or no; I say not; but I never knew that this was the just limitation of obedience due to civil powers: For since the authority of the civil power reaches only to the common welfare and safety of the state and people, the sworn obedience of subjects can be required only in things that relate to the welfare of the people and the state.

I never heard that those famous words loyalty and allegiance which are so often used in our nation, signified any more than our obligation and our readiness to obey the supreme power in things of a civil nature, required by the laws of the land. Now the laws are all made, or are supposed to be made, for the good of the people and the safety of the state. Note, in this safety of the state is also included the honour due to the rulers, for if due honour be not paid to the ruling powers, it endangers the safety of the state.

XI. Let it be further considered also, that in the original compact between the government and the governed, the governed do not consent to part with any liberties of human nature, but only so far as is necessary for civil government and their common protection, security and peace. They are bound therefore to obey, not "in omnibus licitis & honestis," but "in omnibus quæ ad reipublicæ salutem." Can we suppose that when the people swear allegiance to governors, they mean to give them power over all their private and domestic affairs and actions, or the circumstances of them, over their conduct in labour or study, in trade or recreations, and left themselves or their families no liberty of going out or in, when they pleased, or wearing short coats or long, red or blue, of eating bread or flesh or herbs as they thought proper, or dining or supping at a round table or a square one, upon a dish of turnips or a haunch of venison?

And if the people never gave up their liberties in these affairs to the rulers of the state, then the rulers never had a right to claim such obedience: And if they have no right to determine such sort of things, in natural and private life in families, or in any voluntary societies; I know not what divine or human reason they can have to claim this right in religious societies or in churches: Surely they can have

no such pretence, except where the people or the laws have given them such a claim; and after all, whether such laws are good and just may deserve a debate.

XII. Let the christian church in *Corinth* therefore be esteemed but as one of the rest of these human voluntary societies, and it may subsist well enough in a heathen state, if the governors do but merely protect their faithful subjects, and do not stretch their authority into the affairs of religion, which is beyond it's proper extent. *Gallio* the deputy of *Achaia*, had some good notion of this matter in *St. Paul's* time; when he would take no cognizance of words and names and questions about the *jewish* religion, but only about matters of civil wrong or wicked lewdness: But he was much to blame, even according to his own principles, that he did not keep the public peace, and protect *Sophistes* from the mob, "whether he were a *jew* or a heathen or a christian," *Acts* xviii. 12—17. For this was the proper province of a magistrate to interpose in matters of civil wrong or injury.

All that the christian church or any other peaceable society can claim from the state, is protection; and this protection is sufficient to guard them from all disturbance of their peace by men of violence, or harlequins and scaramouches, or any other intruder into their assemblies, chairs or pulpits, besides those whom the society appoints: For if such complaints be made by the society to the magistrate, he has a right to restrain by prison or proper penalties. Such invaders of the public peace, as trespass upon the innocent employment, the ground, possessions and properties of their neighbours; and he is bound to do it as a guardian of the public peace: Nor should any pretence of conscience screen the offender in such cases; nor can the magistrate fulfil his duty without securing an impartial liberty, safety and protection to every loyal assembly, whether it be appointed for music or painting, philosophy or worship.

It should also be added here, that if any persons who are secluded or cast out from these societies, by the rules and vote of the society, will yet obstinately enter in upon their ground, and mix with them in their common acts of instruction, practice, worship, &c. so as to give society any disturbance; it is the business and duty of the civil magistrate, upon proper application made, to guard every innocent society of loyal subjects from such inroads, injuries and disturbances; and that even in their festivals, or recreations, as well as their solemnities or common employments.

Thus far shall suffice to shew the right of a christian church, to be secured from injuries and impositions in common with any other innocent and voluntary societies.

XIII. Now let it be supposed, that some of the civil governors of *Corinth*, should join themselves to any of these societies, whether philosophers, antiquaries, painters, deists, or christians, would there be any sufficient reason why they should be turned out of their posts in the government, because they are become christians, or become antiquaries or philosophers, &c. supposing still that they fulfil the offices of their magistracy with honour?

And much less reason is there, why there should be a law made to seclude them from their civil offices, and lay a public brand or infamy upon them, because they join themselves to particular societies which do not in the least interfere with civil government: Supposing always that in these societies, there is nothing dishonourable or scandalous, which would vilify and debase the dignity of a ruler, and evidently endanger the welfare of the state.

XIV. Yet no ruler in the *corinthian* state, who joins himself to any of these particular societies, has any authority or power to alter the special laws of that society, or to prescribe new rules or practices to it: For he is taken into the society but as a single



single member, and has but his single vote, and consequently has no further right nor authority to introduce any one rule or mode, form or ceremony into the college of philosophers, the society of painters, or the christian church. All the civil power which he carries with him, reaches no further than to see that nothing be done in any of these societies inconsistent with the good of the state.

XV. When a chief civil ruler becomes a member of any of these societies, he gains thereby an opportunity of knowing thoroughly all the affairs of the society, and of observing whether there can be any special benefit, damage or danger to the state, arising from all the opinions and practices thereof. So far it may be beneficial to the state.

And it is certain, this civil ruler may be beneficial to the particular society of which he is a member, if he be rich or great, by procuring for them, or bestowing upon them halls for lectures, mansions for the professors, or chapels for their christian worship, schools for philosophical experiments or painting exercises, &c. and perhaps he may procure civil immunities and advantages for them, that is, such as add no tax or burden, or inconvenience to the state: And he may favour the christian church or the *jeuifh* synagogue if he pleases, so far as to appoint no civil or military duties at the same hours, which would interfere with christian or *jeuifh* worship in the city of *Corinth*.

XVI. Thus there are some advantages which may accrue to the state, and some to the church, whereof the chief magistrates are members, and that without any such alliance between church and state, as some have supposed necessary for the security of both.

But if the advances in temporal things, which the church receives from the state, be not well guarded and limited, the church will grow more earthly, but the state will not grow more holy or heavenly: The church will be in danger of losing it's humility, piety, and purity, and the state will run a great hazard of being made mere servants or slaves to the church. Frequent and long experience has taught the world this sad truth. Again,

XVII. Let us make a farther supposition that both the people and the rulers should be so much in love with the sentiments and practices of the philosophers, the antiquaries, the deists, or the christians, as that the bulk of them should become members of their colleges, societies, or churches: Still the civil power would reach no further than the welfare of the state of *Corinth*. The churches and other societies must still determine for themselves the rules and circumstances of actions that relate to the design of their assembly, whether the rulers of the state vote for it or no; and every society may make such laws for itself and it's own members as it pleases, in things wherein the good or hurt of the state have no concern.

XVIII. Here I know it will be objected, that this is setting up "a dominion within a dominion," or "imperium in imperio," which politicians have usually thought dangerous. But I think it may be sufficiently replied in answer to this difficulty,

Reply. That if every such society keep itself within it's own bounds, and meddle with nothing relating to the state; and if the civil magistrate has the supreme power and dominion even over all these societies, so far as to secure what relates to the civil welfare, the peace of mankind, and the safety of government, there can be no inconvenience or danger in giving a full and complete toleration protection and liberty to any such societies. What detriment can any civil government be exposed to by a master ruling his own family, by his own private laws, or by a tutor or president of a college, who governs his own academy and students by appointed rules of his own,

still

still supposing they meddle not with state-affairs, nor obstruct the public peace or government, but conform to the laws of the state.

XIX. And if the forms of government in the city of *Corinth*, should change from aristocracy to monarchy or democracy, or if it mould itself into any other form, still these societies of christians and philosophers, deists, antiquaries, or painters might be safe in the enjoyment of their proper liberties, and the state suffer not the least inconvenience by them.

XX. Perhaps it will be enquired here, if the bulk of the people of a nation together with their rulers embrace the christian faith, may they not be esteemed as a christian state, and may not the whole nation, be considered both as members of the civil state and of the christian church, and be governed by christian rulers, as officers both of the church and state, and be ruled promiscuously by their laws and sanctions of rewards and penalties both in things sacred and civil? And may it not be maintained as a mixed government or establishment of church and state without any great distinction between them. I answer,

XXI. Answer I. First, when things of so very different a nature are mixed and blended together, it is most likely it will bring a medley of confusions into both: When we unite and mingle ideas so distinct as civil government and religion, as the laws and rights of God and of *Cæsar*, as persons and ordinances temporal and spiritual, as powers sacred and human, as the concerns of the soul and the body, as the things of this world and the things of the world to come, it will be exceeding hard to reason and judge aright concerning the conduct proper to both, or to either of them, and it will be almost impossible to determine and maintain their just limits and boundaries: It will introduce such a perplexity of things, as will scarce allow sufficient grounds to judge, when or how far, one inroads on the other, and to correct any mistakes, irregularities or unhappy consequences, which may be derived and grow from this unnatural mixture. In the second place therefore,

XXII. Answer II. Since we cannot so well reason and determine upon things when in such a confusion, let us reflect what hath been the real effect where such sort of mixtures have been practised. Thus it has been of old, when *roman* emperors lent the bishops their secular power, and the bishops gave them a right to call synods, to preside in them, to determine affairs in the church.

Thus it has been done in many of the popish states and kingdoms, where bishops have been the chief rulers in the state: But if we enquire of our ancestors in this nation when it was all subject to popery, or if we survey the popish nations of *Europe*, and observe their mixture of civil and sacred powers, what can we find derived from it but frequent usurpation of civil power in things sacred, or of ecclesiastical power in things civil, and yet generally such a mutual agreement will be made between civil and ecclesiastical rulers, by some superiorities on one side or the other, as to keep the persons and consciences of the common people in deep bondage? This odd mixture has produced infinite confusion and mischief, both in church and state; it has brought in wars and slaughters, inquisitions and bloody persecutions, loss of all piety and goodness, burning zeal, blindness, hypocrisy and superstition, slavery of souls and bodies, and fraud and violence without end.

XXIII. Never did the alwise God mingle sacred and civil power throughout any national government but that of the *Jews*, where he himself was both the political and ecclesiastical head, the God of the church, and the king of the state. Scarce are these mixtures safe in any other hand but his. When in later ages some of their high priests the successors of the *maccabees*, grew up to be kings, and God their su-

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preme king withdrew from them his divine influences, and his kind superintendency, what terrible confusion, barbarity, and madness were sometimes found among them?

XXIV. And I might add, that such dangerous mixtures as these in every popish state or government, where there is no toleration nor liberty allowed to other christians, who would maintain the purity of their religion; these, I say, are the very composition of the feet and toes of *Nebuchadnezzar's* great image in *Daniel* chapter ii. which were made part of potter's clay and part of iron\*. These may try to mix, but they will not well cleave to one another. And if the dream of the *assyrian* king be divine, or the interpretation of the *jewish* prophet be true, these "toes and these feet, wherein the iron is mixed with miry clay, wait only for the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, to smite the huge image upon it's feet and to break it to pieces." Then the four vast monarchies of this world meet their last period, and become like the chaff of a threshing-floor, and the wind carries them away: Then shall that stone grow and fill the whole earth, and the kingdoms "of this world become the kingdom of the Lord and his *Christ*, and he shall reign for ever and ever." *Rev. xi. 15.* Amen.

\* *Lowth* in his commentary on *Daniel* seems to approve entirely this exposition, for he gives no other sense of the words, verse 42. And if this were a proper place for explaining the prophecies of *Daniel* or the visions of *St. John*, chapters xiii. and xvii. I think it might be made to appear beyond all reasonable opposition, that the first head of the *roman* empire was only civil, and strong as iron, like the legs of *Nebuchadnezzar's* image: The last was part civil and part ecclesiastical; such were the feet and ten toes of this image, or the popedom with it's ten kingdoms, mingled of iron and clay, which await this final destruction.

T H E  
R U I N and R E C O V E R Y  
O F  
M A N K I N D:

O R,

An ATTEMPT to vindicate the SCRIPTURAL  
ACCOUNT of these great events upon the plain  
principles of REASON.

Vol. VI.

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RULIN and RECOVERY

M. A. N. K. I. N. D.

An Attempt to understand the Scriptural  
Account of these great events upon the plain  
principles of Reason.

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T H E  
P R E F A C E.

**A**MIDST the darkness of our degenerate state, God has been pleased to furnish us with two springs of light, to lead us into the knowledge of our own misery, and to direct us in the way to his favour and our happiness. These are well known by the names of reason and revelation, that is, the reason of man and the revelation of God.

Right reason is ever uniform and consistent with itself, and is the same in all ages. It was given to man at first, to teach him all that we call natural religion; and even now, in it's diminished glory, it gives sufficient evidence of our ruin, and assures us feelingly of our universal degeneracy, our lost innocence and peace: It affords us also many hints of the favourable condescensions of divine mercy, the necessity of our repentance of sin, and our trust in divine grace, in order to our recovery.

It is granted that the dictates of reason amongst the various tribes and generations of fallen mankind, have been mingled with a thousand prejudices, weaknesses and wanderings, with the mistakes of fancy, and the follies of superstition; and at best it has not been found of itself practically sufficient to instruct us in all things that relate to our salvation: Yet still, reason is a light given us by God himself, and it has very much to do in our direction toward our present duty and our final felicity.

But since our reason is so defective, both in it's discovery of our ruin and our restoration, God has been pleased to teach in a more immediate manner by the light of revelation, and has given to mankind early discoveries of his mind and will before scripture was written, and then by *Moses* and other holy writers, he has furnished them with knowledge of their original apostasy from God, their guilt and wretchedness; and he has been ever since leading them onwards by different steps or degrees towards the full discovery of his will and their salvation by *Jesus Christ*, the mediator.

And since the revelations of God to men, have been so very early and various, and have been delivered to us by different persons, and in different ages, there may be some difficulties arising from this variety: There may be some seeming inconsistencies between the several parts of it, and some supposed oppositions to the light of reason: Yet it is certain that the two only lights which God has favoured us with in order to learn his will and our duty, can never contradict themselves, nor each other. There is not any one part of divine revelation which is really inconsistent with reason, or with any other parts of revelation itself. There is certainly a glorious connexion and divine harmony between them all, and all join together to make up one complete



scheme, gradually advancing to perfection, and terminating and centering at last in our full recovery, to the favour and image of God by the promised *Messiah* or Saviour.

Now as the revelation of God in an illustrious manner supplies the deficiencies of our reason, and enlightens our natural darkness in the knowledge of divine things, so the exercise of our reasoning powers is very necessary to assist us not only in the understanding of the several parts of revelation, but in reconciling them to each other as well as to the dictates of right reason. It is our reason which shews us this blessed harmony.

If it should be found, that in my sentiments on this subject I have followed no human scheme, no established system, no hypothesis of any contending party, let it be known that my studies have been more engaged in meditation, than in reading controversies; reason and the bible were the only springs whence I derived my sentiments, and the only tests by which I tried them, and not the authority of any great name, or any sect or party among men. Therefore if any reader is determined already to believe nothing but what is perfectly conformable to some favourite system, or the opinions of the party, which he has chosen for his test of truth and error, I shall not court his favour, nor be greatly moved by his censure.

But if I have been so happy as to set these truths, which scripture has revealed concerning our misery and divine mercy, in so favourable a light, as to make it evident to well-disposed impartial readers, how far they are supported by reason itself, and to discover and maintain this agreement between these two different manifestations of God to men, I have attained my end: If I have been enabled in any measure to render these sacred truths more intelligible and more credible to the sincere enquirers after truth, and to relieve the divine revelations of scripture, against the cavils of an age which greatly pretends to reason, I shall account my labour well employed.

The deist will have no longer cause to triumph in the assurance of his attacks against scripture, nor shall the christian want matter for his satisfaction and joy, when he sees his divine religion vindicated by the powers of reason.

My chief design, and that which has regulated all my meditations and reasonings, is to establish and confirm what appears to me to be plain matter of fact, in the sinful and miserable circumstances of all the children of *Adam* by nature, and their hopes of recovery by divine grace, so far as either the light of nature or scripture would assist me, and to vindicate the moral perfections of God, his holiness, justice, and goodness in his works of providence and grace, or in his whole government of the world.

The ground-work of my scheme is laid in the original rectitude of man, and his early degeneracy into sin and misery; and I have drawn from the mere light of nature, sufficient proof and evidence of both these.

If what has been said in answer to the first question, does not sufficiently prove the doctrine of original sin from the universal sinfulness and misery of mankind, I hope the first essay in the appendix will do it; the first part whereof represents that subject more largely, as it relates to the misery of man, and the latter end of it briefly enforces the argument from his universal sinfulness, both by reason and scripture. The reader is desired to forgive the repetition of a few sentiments which are set in various lights, especially considering that this essay was first designed only for a philosophical enquiry or amusement, and not to take its place in this book.

It would have been needless labour to enter into any examination of the learned doctor *Whitby's* scheme published in his writings, and to answer all his objections about

about original sin, imputed or inherent: For if the facts which I recite concerning the sinful nature and wretched circumstances of mankind, even from their infancy, are found by constant experience and observation to be true, then a great part of his scheme vanishes and dies as a matter of mere mistake in fact: And if my scheme or hypothesis for the solution of the difficulties which attend this doctrine, is supported by reason and scripture, then his objections against it must fall of course. No objection against a certain truth can ever be valid or strong, though at first view it may appear ever so plausible. And I thought this to be the plainest and shortest way of writing and reasoning, and not to embarrass my readers more than was necessary with the perplexities of controversial writings on so difficult a subject\*.

Besides all this I add, that though a considerable part of that writer's objections against original sin may lie heavy on some defenders of it, yet those difficulties are utterly precluded by the hypothesis which I have proposed in the last question.

What that very learned author has drawn out of the fathers with much labour and criticism, let it fall on either side of the controversy, will have but small force to move any man who considers these two things.

1. How little we can suppose to learn of the certain doctrines of *Christ* and his apostles, with any exactness and accuracy from the mere traditions of persons who lived for the most part a hundred and fifty, two hundred, or three hundred years after them? For we have the original sacred writings as well as they; the rest is all but tradition and uncertainty.

2. When he considers that the early fathers, who wrote before these controversies arose and were debated in the church, represented their sentiments on these subjects in very loose and indeterminate language, as doctor *Whitby* himself will easily allow, and they were indeed hardly consistent with themselves, or with one another, in this as well as in many other points of opinion or doctrine. This uncertainty of their sense is the spring of many debates between doctor *Whitby* and *Gerard Vossius*.

I know some opinions will be found here, which are supposed to be borrowed from the common schemes of orthodox writers, but let them not be at once renounced with contempt and disdain †, by an age which is fond of novelty and reasoning. Perhaps there may be some reasonings here brought to support them, which have not been set in a clear and full light by former writers; and notwithstanding their old-fashioned appearances, these may be found to be divine truths.

If the reader shall meet with any new thoughts here, let not the book be at once rejected on that account: This preface intreats the author may be forgiven, who has entered into an untrodden path sometimes, not willingly, but he has been constrained to it, in order to solve such difficulties as we have never yet seen relieved to the general satisfaction of men, by all the usual and common tracks of argument. "Every scribe who is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, should bring forth out of his treasure things new and old." *Matth. xiii. 52.*

If

\* Yet I must confess in the second edition of this book, I have found this intermixture of objections and answers more necessary than I imagined; and that merely to keep errors from triumph, and honest readers from mistake.

† It is too frequent a custom of many readers to applaud or censure a book very highly, according to the opinion it favours, not according to the reason or argument it produces. If the opinion be agreeable to the sentiments and language of any particular party, which the reader has chosen, the arguments, though ever so common or trifling, are pronounced strong and cogent. On the other hand, if the opinion happen to be near akin to those of a contrary sect, then the arguments brought to support it are all trifling: The author is a heretic, and therefore his reasonings must needs be all weak and insufficient, if not dangerous and destructive." May divine providence deliver all that I write on deep and difficult subjects from the hand of such readers, till they are become more sincere and impartial in the search of truth!



If every person who is pleased to peruse these leaves, pays but the same high veneration to what scripture has revealed, has the same just regards to the plain dictates of right reason, the same deep sense of the difficulties which attend these enquiries, and such a constant zeal to abolish the controversies of christianity, and to reconcile contending christians, as the writer desires to have; I persuade myself there will not be many rash and sudden or severe censures pronounced upon the arguments here used, though they may not happen to convince the reader: Nor will there be many angry adversaries, or many disdainful opposers of the reconciling sentiments of this book, whether they may carry in them the appearance of being old or new.

Neither novelty nor antiquity of opinion can make any certain pretences to truth, nor can they be esteemed just prejudices against it: As there are many divine truths which have been known and acknowledged from all antiquity, so I am persuaded there are some others which have never been seen in their full force and perspicuity since the days of our Saviour and the apostles; there are some sacred verities which have had much darkness diffused around them by early corruptions of the faith, and by the controversies of succeeding ages; and these stand in need of some further light to dissipate that darkness, and restore them to their primitive perspicuity. Whether any of my attempts or labours here shall be successful for this end, must be entrusted with the judgment of the reader, and the providence of God.

And now I have proposed these thoughts to the world in hope to clear up some difficulties in our holy religion, and to shew how far our own reason may support what scripture reveals; I leave all with the public, and shall not be solicitous to support all these sentiments, or to vindicate these proposals. If any person can derive any degree of light toward his satisfaction from these papers, I shall rejoice with him. Let every one chuse what he likes, and neglect the rest. I will not persuade any man to be of my opinion till he sees reason for it; and whensoever I see reason, I shall change them myself. Our best-concerted schemes have their imperfections, and therefore I dare not assume certainty in matters of doubtful disputation: Nor do I assert or affirm several things which I have here written; for I know myself a weak fallible creature, and it is no wonder if I should fall into mistakes.

I should be glad to see a safer and more consistent scheme on these subjects proposed to the world, which may rectify all the errors of this book with convincing evidence, and scatter our darknesses like a rising sun. To cavil at particular thoughts or phrases is much easier than to form a perfect hypothesis. But it is the prerogative of the great God only to pierce through all his own infinite schemes with an unerring eye, to surround them with an all-comprehensive view, to grasp them all in one single survey, and to spread a reconciling light over all their immense varieties. Man must yet grapple with difficulties in this dusky twilight; but God in his time will irradiate the earth more plentifully with his light and truth; then darkness and contentions shall fly away for ever. Hasten, O Lord the happy day. Amen.

A D V E R -

# ADVERTISEMENT

Concerning the

## SECOND EDITION.

**I**T is no little pains that I have taken to review this book since it was printed, as well as many years before : I have read also what has been published in opposition to it, and I would ever keep my mind in such a temper, as is ready to receive the truth from every quarter, and learn my mistakes in order to amend them.

But I am not yet convinced of any errors in the great doctrines here maintained ; nor does my heart tell me, that my representation of the wretched state of mankind in it's present degenerate circumstances exceeds the truth. It is by no means true, which some have imagined, that a retirement from the world, and dwelling much among my own solitary thoughts and old authors, have led me into these melancholy and dismal apprehensions of mankind : But it is my free and public converse with the world in my earlier and more sprightly parts of life, hath given me these just and distressful views of all the race of *Adam*. Daily observation in riper years continues to assure, that there is much more folly, sin and misery among men, than I have described : Hereby my proof and evidence of some original and criminal degeneracy of the creature grows brighter and stronger, since these mischiefs could not arise merely from the immediate hand of God, as a righteous and merciful creator.

This scriptural doctrine of original sin has engaged my pen, because, in my opinion, it has a most extensive and powerful influence on several parts of practical godliness : I think a deep sense of it lays the best foundation for our submission to those blessed doctrines of grace, which make up so great a part of the gospel of *Christ*. It is this article which humbles and abases the pride of man, and brings him to disclaim all self-sufficiency, and to lie at the foot of God. It is this makes him poor in spirit, and renders him constantly a dependent and supplicant for divine grace. This leads him out of himself to *Christ* for righteousness, wisdom, and strength, as well as excites him to a more fervent gratitude for every blessing of soul and body. It is this doctrine that powerfully forbids those vicious passions of self-admiration, and scorn of our neighbour, and as strongly inclines us to christian compassion. It softens our hearts to pity and relieve each other in the various distresses of flesh or spirit, since we are all by nature under the same condemnation and misery.

Whensoever I see this doctrine of original sin rejected and renounced, there is sufficient reason from many observations, to expect the glories of the gospel will in the



the same proportion be depreciated, neglected and despised : If we are all born still in our original state of nature and innocence, the abounding grace and salvation of *Christ Jesus* does not seem so very necessary for us ; if it was but a little bruise we suffered by the fall of *Adam*, a little grace may heal us. Nor shall I wonder to see any man by degrees run intirely into deism, who scornfully abandons this truth. I confess I take this article to be of such eminent importance in our holy profession, as bespeaks our solicitous regards ; though a late author, with whom I have now to do, calls it " one of the greatest absurdities in all the system of corrupt religion."

I have endeavoured throughout this whole compofure to relieve and soften all the harsher, and more obnoxious parts of this doctrine of original sin, and several other articles of our religion dependent upon it ; and this I did attempt here and there by some new sentiments, which I was sensible must run the risk of severe trial, and bear the test of ancient prejudice. But this freedom of thought seemed to be necessary where former solutions failed, as I said before.

I have also ventured to preclude, or to cut off some of the harder and more offensive consequences that have often drawn or forced from these articles. It is evident that these points have been sometimes carried into extremes, and the explication of them has not always been well limited and guarded. To effect this work and to secure due honour to the moral perfections of God, under all the sinful and wretched scenes of human life, was one great end of my writing : My intentions were perfectly pacific and not contentious, and it is with great reluctance I am drawn into any debate.

It was my design also to leave these my sentiments to the world, without any further vindication or defence ; and yet I would not have it said or thought, that I utterly disregard all opinions and arguments different from my own. I am therefore almost constrained in this second edition to make some remarks upon the only attempt to answer this treatise which I have heard of, and that is the supplement to a book very unjustly called " The scripture doctrine of original sin, proposed to free and candid examination."

It is acknowledged, that in this supplement the same writer uses more candor and softer language, than he has done in the book itself, and deals for the most part in such a style as becomes a christian controversy : Yet I would humbly ask, whether he does not sometimes let a sharper arrow fly off ? But this may be easily imputed to a sudden effort of warmer zeal against the doctrine which he utterly denies. I would ask also, whether he does not sometimes advance a mere popular objection, and pursue it in such an overbearing manner, as might intimidate common readers, and affright them from these sacred truths, though they appear plain in several places of scripture, and are supported by the daily observations of men, both heathens and christians ? I would ask yet again, whether he does not now and then indulge a bold and sublime expression to break out, which might be taken for a flourish of glory rising from a contempt of all that is or can be offered in defence of our doctrines ? But the reader need not be afraid of such triumphant language, for I trust that whosoever will survey this whole debate without prejudice, will find that the author frequently triumphs without a victory, and though he has demolished many pages of mine in his own esteem, it is with mere shadows of argument.

It is true indeed, that the bulk of mankind are often carried quite away into flattering errors by positive assertions and strong assurances ; they dare not oppose a writer who with a sovereign scorn defies all opposition, and despises every thing that can be proposed against his darling opinions. Upon this view of things, I have said  
within

within myself, "Surely I will begin to learn this manner of writing too, that I may gain more success for the great truths of the gospel in the minds of men." But, alas, I fear I am very much unqualified to aim at this talent: *David* might better wear *Saul's* armour than I could attempt this piece of heroism, or enter into this manner of dispute. Nor should I be perfectly satisfied with myself, to gain the assent of my readers, without more substantial and convincing evidence. The world indeed are ready to imagine, that where there is such confidence, and such triumph, there must be abundant proofs to support them; but they little consider how far this sonorous language will serve instead of reason and argument, and what numerous profelytes have been gained hereby to the several sects, parties or professions of human or divine science.

I must acknowledge, I once hoped that the very answers which I had given to various objections in the first edition of this treatise, would have resolved most of the difficulties which have been since objected: But many of these answers have been utterly disregarded, and those very objections again repeated. Now that such a solution of the difficulties may not be overlooked again, I have greatly enlarged the index, or table of contents, so that it reaches to almost every page, and points even an unwilling eye directly to those difficulties, and the solution of them.

Yet to make the subject of this treatise still more plain and easy and defensible, I have in this edition here and there interspersed a few needful observations and remarks on this subject, either in the book itself, or in the margin; which I hope may be sufficient hints to solve any old or new objections, which are or may be proposed, and to guard the reader more effectually from error and mistake in these important points.

It is true, I have mentioned no names, I have cited no pages, nor in all places have I used the very words of the objectors, because I would not turn this pacific treatise into a stage of controversy: Yet I hope I have given the full strength of the objection, as well as answered it with success. But the index is so large, and particular, as will sufficiently direct an enquirer to every objection and answer.

Upon a review I have written much more than I designed, and am heartily sorry that I cannot so distinguish the additions made to this second edition, as to have printed them apart, for the service of those who are possessed of the first: But since they lie so much scattered through many pages, I humbly hope my friends will forgive this wrong, and permit a book which hath been assaulted, to receive a few explanations and defences for the satisfaction of the world, though they may not find their own particular interest consulted therein.

I do not pretend to have touched upon every opposition which is made in this supplement, against the doctrine which I have maintained, though I am not conscious that I have omitted any one difficulty or objection of weight and moment, which I have met with in that book, and which has not been answered before. All lesser matters I am content to leave to the unbiassed judgment of persons of common understanding and piety. Souls impressed with a due veneration for scripture, and with a deep sense of their own sin and misery, guilt and weakness in the sight of God, will not easily be persuaded to twist and turn the expressions of the sacred writers from their most obvious and natural sense; nor will they hearken readily to those errors, which are contrary to their just experience, as well as to the dictates of the word of God.

But if any thing further be required for the confirmation and defence of the truth, I heartily recommend my reader to a late excellent "vindication of the scripture doctrine



doctrine of original sin." I confess indeed, it hath received the shew of a reply; but all the world sees how very few of the arguments there used, have been ever answered or regarded, so that most of them stand in their full force still: And I cheerfully leave this cause with that learned and ingenious friend of mine who wrote it.

I hope he will think it worth his while publicly to take further notice of this controversy: I am well assured he is able to support this doctrine with solid force of argument; and he can do it with candor too, where he is not irritated by "any unreasonable airs of infallibility and assurance, by sharp reproaches of sacred and important truth, and by feeble shadows and colours of argument, which have been often baffled and confounded." These are the things which, as he expressly informed me, gave him so just a resentment, and provoked his pen to some severities against the book which he opposed, and he professes also, this was done in imitation of the author of it. I wish with all my soul that no christian controversy might ever give occasion for such excuses on either side.

For my part, I pray for the blessing which this author supposes we have always enjoyed; I wish heartily that original sin may be demolished in us all, and have no more existence: But so long as this real and dreadful malady continues to rage through the world, and goes on to destroy mankind in multitudes, I hope in every age some wise and happy pens will arise to declare the painful truth, and convince the world of this article, which reason, scripture, and universal experience join to support. If all sense of our native sin and wretchedness be banished from among men, the rising ages may be tempted to neglect the only sovereign remedy of the grace of *Christ*, the second *Adam*, upon a mistaken presumption, that our natures have received no infection from the first.

**T H E**

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T H E

R U I N and R E C O V E R Y

O F

M A N K I N D, &c.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N.

*God made man upright.*

**M**AN is a creature made up of two distinct ingredients, an animal body and a rational mind, so united as to act in a mutual correspondence according to certain laws and conditions appointed by his creator. Now suppose the great and blessed God, who is perfect in wisdom and power, in justice and goodness, were to form such a new creature as man is, and any of us should sit down and consider, according to the best exercise of our reason, what qualifications would be due to this new-made creature, as proceeding from a being of such wisdom, justice and goodness, we should probably trace out these several particulars.

I. We reasonably suppose he must have “ a perfection of natural powers, both of body and spirit,” considered as in a state of union, and suited to his present circumstances.

Not that we have any reason to suppose man should be made so perfect a being as God could make him; for the wisdom of God plainly designed to display it's unbounded varieties of contrivance in different ranks and orders of his creation: And besides, we cannot reasonably imagine this creature man should be made with such sublime perfections at first, as he himself might afterwards arrive at by a wise improvement of his powers: For God would not preclude either the diligence, or the pleasure of his intelligent creature, from advancing itself to superior excellencies. But still that creature which was designed to bear his maker's nearest likeness and authority in this lower world, must have powers perfectly sufficient for his present well-being and acting in that station wherein God his creator placed him.



It has been indeed the vain fancy of some writers, that the eye of man in his first creation was so acute and penetrating, that it could discover those distant stars and planets of heaven, or those minute atoms in the contexture of earthly bodies round about us, which are now only to be seen by the help of optic glasses : And they have been so weak as to imagine that his ear could take in the most distant and feeblest sounds, and was equal in it's own original powers, to the advantages which we now receive from speaking and hearing trumpets : And that his feeling and his smelling had such proportionable superiorities in his state of innocence beyond all that we now experience. But it has been sufficiently made evident, that animal powers exalted to this degree would have been a burden, and a perpetual inconvenience to us in the present state ; they would have been calamities instead of comforts, and as an ingenious author says, a man endued with such exquisite senses

Would be " so tremblingly alive all o'er,  
To smart and agonize at every pore :  
Or, quick effluvia darting through his brain,  
Die of a rose in aromatic pain.  
Nature would thunder in his opening ears,  
And stun him with the music of the spheres. "

POPE.

But all the senses of this creature, though not so exquisitely fine, yet they must be clear and strong, his limbs vigorous and active, his body healthy in all the inward and outward parts of it, and every natural power in it's proper order.

Surely God would form such a creature in a state of perfect ease, without any original malady of nature to give him pain or sorrow. I cannot think there would be any natural tendency in his animal body to pains, diseases, or death, while he remained innocent and without sin or blame. And if there was any such thing as pain admitted into his first constitution, his pleasures must at least be equal to his pains, and his advantages also equal to his dangers : The very justice of God the creator seems to require this.

I add further, that if we consider the goodness of God, surely we must say the pleasure of his innocent creature should be superior to a state of mere ease or balance to his pains, and his advantages should be superior to his dangers : Divine goodness seems to require this, as antecedent in nature to any state of trial.

And as the powers of his body must be perfect in these respects, so the faculties of his soul must have their perfection too.

His mind or understanding must have all that knowledge both of God and creatures which was needful for his happiness. Not that we suppose God should give his creature man, when he first formed him, all manner of knowledge in arts and sciences, in philosophy and divinity ; but he must know at his first creation, what was necessary for his present peace and welfare ; his reason must be clear, and his judgment uncorrupted, his conscience upright and sensible, and his mind furnished with all necessary truths.

This leads me to speak also of his moral perfection. A rational creature thus made, must be not only innocent as a tree or a brute is, but must be formed holy ; that is, he must have a principle of holiness concreated with him : His will must have an inward bias and propensity to holiness and virtue ; he must have an inward inclination to please and honour that God who made him, a supreme love to his creator,  
and

and a zeal and desire to serve him, a holy fear of offending him, with a readiness to do all his will.

In short, either the new-created man loved God supremely, or not: If he did not, he was not innocent, since the law and light of nature requires such a supreme love to God. If he did love God supremely, then he stood disposed and ready for every act of adoration and obedience; and this is true holiness of heart. And, indeed, without this how could a God of holiness love the work of his own hands?

There must also in this creature be found a regular subjection of the inferior powers to the superior; sense and appetite and passion must be subject to reason, that is, the mind and conscience must have a power and readiness to govern these lower faculties, and keep them in due obedience, that he might not offend against the law of his creation, and his will must be inclined to it.\*

He must also have his heart inlaid with love and good-will to the creatures, and especially those of his own species, if he should be placed among them; and he must be endued with a principle of honesty and truth in dealing with them. And if many of these creatures were made at once, there should be no domineering pride, no malice, no envy, no falsehood, no brawls or contentions among them; but all harmony and love, each seeking the welfare and happiness of his fellow-creatures as well as his own.

This principle of universal righteousness and holiness, I take to be the noblest part of that image of God, that is, his moral image, in which *Moses* the *jewish* historian represents man to be at first created, and which I think was due to his nature from a God of equity and goodness. And the same writer assures us, when God surveyed all his works at the end of his creation he pronounced them all very good. And *Solomon* the wisest of men, in his book of *Ecclesiastes*, assures us, that "God made man upright." *Eccles. vii. 29.*

It is granted, that the natural image of God in which man was created, consisted partly in his spiritual, intelligent and immortal nature, and the various faculties thereof; and his political image, if I may so express it, consisted in his being made lord and governor over all the lower creation: But when we speak of this part of the divine image which is moral, we are assured by *Paul*, that it was the rectitude of his nature, or his conformity to the will and law of God. *Paul* was once a *jewish* pharisee, and well understood the sense of *Moses*, and in his epistle to the *Ephesians*, iv. 24. he says, that the image of God, into which man is to be renewed, and consequently in which he was first made, consists "in righteousness and true holiness, as well as in knowledge," *Col. iii. 10* †.

II. From the justice and goodness of God, we may also reasonably infer, that though man might be made with a perfect freedom of will, and with a power to chuse evil

\* Surely if the soul or will of this new-made creature had not a real propensity to love and obey God who is a spirit, but was merely formed with a natural capacity or power to do so, in a state of indifference to good or evil; then his being put into such a union with flesh and blood among a thousand animal temptations, would have been an over-balance on the side of sensuality and vice: But our reason can never suppose that God the wise, just and good, would have placed a new-made creature in such an original situation.

† Notwithstanding all the cavils which have been raised against these words, yet if these two texts are considered together, their most obvious meaning and the plainest sense of them abides still confirmed, and will strike an honest and unbiassed reader. The new man, or the principle of true religion in the heart, is created by God after his moral image, wherein he created man at first, that is with a holy temper of mind and disposition, to the ready practice of all righteousness as fast as occasions and opportunities arise.



as well as good, that he might be put into a state of probation; yet it seems necessary that he should not only have a superior propensity to what was good wrought at first into his nature, but he must also have a "full sufficiency of power to preserve himself in this state of obedience and love to his creator," and to guard himself from every temptation and sin, if his faculties were rightly employed.

He must therefore have a sufficient knowledge of God and himself and his duty, so far as was necessary to practise it: He must have his maker's law written in his heart, that is, he must have such light of reason and conscience as, if carefully employed, would always lead him to judge aright concerning his duty; and he must have a ready and proximate ability to practise and fulfil it. Surely he must be furnished with powers of self-preservation in his state of innocency, and sufficient to guard him from offending his creator, and losing his happiness. This the justice and the goodness of God seem to require. His natural powers in themselves must have a full sufficiency for his own security from sin, if he used those natural powers in the best manner he was capable of; otherwise he would be exposed to unavoidable sin and misery, and certainly fall into it, if he were not able to preserve his innocence and virtue: He would as it were be made for his maker's anger, if he were not able to preserve himself in his love.

III. It is highly probable from the goodness of God, that such a creature would be made immortal, that is, he would have had no principles of decay or death in him. It is true, the great God, considered merely as an absolute Lord and sovereign of his creatures, might take away all that he had given him at pleasure; but it is hardly to be supposed, that if his creature stood obedient to all his maker's will, his wisdom and goodness would have destroyed an intelligent creature who had continued to serve and please him. Whatsoever had been done to his body, yet still we would suppose, God would not divest his soul of his natural immortality, but rather have advanced it to some better vehicle, or dwelling-place in some upper world.

It is likely also that God would "have endowed his soul with powers to arrive at higher degrees of excellency and happiness," than those in which he was at first formed: And hereby there was great encouragement given both to his watchfulness against every danger of sinning against God, and hurting himself, as well as to his zeal and diligence both in improving his natural powers, and in performing eminent services for his maker and converse with him. This would be the way for him to improve in the likeness, and in the love of that almighty being who made him, as well as more firmly to secure his own immortality and happiness.

IV. I think we may be able to add also, that the habitation, in which a God of infinite goodness would place such a holy and innocent creature, "should be a very beautiful and magnificent building, furnished with all manner of necessities and conveniences of life, and prepared not only for his safety and support, but also for his delight." Our reason seems to say this: And *Moses* writing concerning the first created pair of mankind, tells us, that when they were brought into this world, they were placed in *Eden*, or a garden of pleasure, and had a right given them to all the excellent fruits and delights of such a garden, and were made lords of all the creatures round about them, both in the vegetative and animal world.

And as the dwelling of such an innocent and holy creature should be delightful and convenient, so neither should there be any thing noxious or destructive found in

in this habitation, but what this excellent creature man should have sufficient notice of, and should be endowed with sufficient power to oppose it, or to avoid it.

Or if we should suppose that this creature was placed in such a state of trial by his maker, as that he should be capable of receiving some unavoidable injuries from any noxious thing that was near him, it seems reasonable that he should have a proximate and immediate ability, by the right use of his understanding and his will, and his other powers, to relieve himself, and to turn every such injury to his own superior advantage, and to balance every pain by equal or superior pleasure.

V. And if this creature had power to propagate it's own kind, the child should be innocent and holy, and capable of maintaining it's duty and happiness as well as the parent.

Now if these are the qualifications with which such a new-made creature should be endued, and these the circumstances in which our reason would judge from the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God that he ought to be situated; then by a careful survey of what mankind now is, and a comparison thereof with what reason would tell us he ought to be, we may be able to arrive at some determination, whether mankind is at present such a creature as the great and blessed God made him at first: Which is the the subject of the ensuing enquiry.

## Q U E S T I O N I.

*Is man in his present circumstances such a creature as he came out of the hands of God his creator? Or, is he depraved and ruined by some universal degeneracy of his nature?*

**I** HOPE we may derive some evident and complete answer to this enquiry from the following considerations.

Consideration I. This earth, which was designed for the habitation of man, carries with it some evident tokens of ruin and desolation, and does not seem to be ordained, in it's present form and circumstances, for the habitation of innocent beings; but is more apparently fitted for the dwelling-place of creatures who are degenerate and fallen from God.

It is granted, that the beauty and order of this lower world, even in it's present constitution, and the wonderful texture, composition and harmony of the several parts of it, both in air, earth and sea, are most happily suited to the various purposes of that almighty being who made it: They give a constant and illustrious display of the power, wisdom and goodness of their creator. Yet it must be confessed also, there are some glaring and uncontested proofs of the terrors of his justice, and the executions of his vengeance both past and future.

Is not the form or shape of our earth, in the present divisions and boundaries of seas and shores, continents and islands, very rude and irregular, abrupt and horrid?

Does



Does it look like the regular and beautiful product of a God of wisdom and order? Survey a map of the world, and say, does the form of it strike our eyes with any natural beauty or harmony? Has it the appearance of a lovely and well-adjusted piece of workmanship? Or rather, does it not bear strongly on our sight the ideas of ruin and confusion? Travel over the countries of this globe, or visit some of the wilder parts of our own *british* islands, and make just remarks on them all. What various appearances of a ruined world? What vast broken mountains hang frightfully over the heads of travellers? What stupendous cliffs and promontories rise high and hideous to behold? What dreadful precipices, which make our nature giddy to look down, and are ready to betray our feet into downfalls and destructions? What immense extents of waste and barren ground in some countries? What hideous and unpassable deserts? What broad and faithless morasses, which are made at once both deaths and graves to travellers who venture upon them? What huge ruinous caverns of frightful aspect, deep and wide, big enough to bury whole cities?

Notwithstanding all these appearances of ruin and desolation on this earth, yet it is granted, that the great God may have made use of these ragged cliffs and promontories, these dismal caverns, deserts and morasses, &c. to serve various purposes of his providence for the good of mankind, while they dwell here, as well as sometimes for their punishment. His wisdom can bring good out of evil, and extract conveniencies and comforts out of the most hideous and desolate aspect of things. And thus his wisdom and goodness are glorified in the midst of these formidable scenes. And there remain still sufficient evidences of the perfections and glory of the creator in this earth, notwithstanding the many appearances of judgment and ruin which are found here, as in *Rom. i. 20.*

But let us proceed into this melancholy spectacle. What resistless deluges of water in a season of great rains come rolling down the hills, bear down all things in their course, and threaten spacious desolation? What roaring and tremendous water-falls in some parts of the globe? What burning mountains in whose caverns are lakes of glowing metal, or of liquid fire, ready to overflow and burst upon the lower lands; or their bowels are consumed within, and they are turned into a mere shell of earth, covering prodigious cavities of smoke, and furnaces of flame? And they seem to wait only for a divine command to break inward, and bury towns and provinces in fiery ruin.

What unknown and active treasures of air or wind, are pent up in the bowels of the earth by the rarefactions produced from subterraneous ferments and fires, all prepared to break out into wide and surprising mischief? What huge torrents of water rush and roar through the hollows of the globe we tread? What dreadful sounds and threatening appearances from the region of meteors in the air? What clouds charged with flame and thunder, which are ready to burst on the earth, and discompose and terrify all nature for many miles round and to make dreadful havock of mankind?

When I seriously take a survey of some such scenes as these, I am very ready to say within myself, "Surely this earth of our's, in these rude and broken appearances, this unsettled and dangerous state of it, was designed as a dwelling for some unhappy inhabitants, who did or would transgress the laws of their maker, and deeply merit desolation from his hand, and he has here stored up his magazines of divine artillery and death against the day of punishment."

But

But to take one step further, how often have the terrible occurrences of nature in the air, earth and sea, and the calamitous incidents in divine providence in several countries, how often have they given an actual confirmation to this sentiment? What sweeping and destructive storms have we and our fathers seen by land and sea, even in this temperate island of *Great Britain*? What particular floods of water and violent explosions of fire do we read of in the histories of the world? What shocking convulsions of the globe stretching far and wide under the affrighted nations for three or four thousand miles, and spreading terror through every heart? What sudden and huge disruptions of the caverns of the earth with tremendous bellowings, which have filled it's inhabitants with horror and astonishment, which have deformed it's blooming surface, and have made wide devastations? What storms and thunders have spread abroad fatal mischiefs? Do not these seem to be evident tokens of the actual displeasure of a God against the inhabitants of this globe? Can we ever suppose that an infinitely good and gracious being would have originally so formed and governed the inanimate parts of this lower world, as to produce such deadly concussions and such desolating appearances, if he had not designed it to be the habitation of such creatures, as he foresaw would become rebels against their creator, and deserve these strokes of his indignation?

The remarks which the late ingenious doctor *Woodward* has made in his "essay toward a natural history of the earth," may sufficiently convince any reasonable and attentive reader, that this globe of our's hath suffered such dreadful and desolating convulsions as we speak of, which must must have been attended with horrible ruin, calamity and destruction to the men who were then inhabitants of it. He hath found the several strata or layers of the upper crust of the earth, whether marl, marble, clay, chalk, or sand, &c. to have been broken to pieces and dissolved, in *America* as well as *Europe*, *Asia* and *Africa*; and that huge trees and the bones of animals, together with infinite shells of sea-fishes and other productions of the sea, have been found inclosed in these strata, or beds of marl, clay, chalk, &c. and that at vast depths of earth, as well as at long distances from the sea: And whosoever shall peruse that author will see plainly, that the upper part of this globe has been ruined almost into a chaos, since it was made; and he imputes it with great reason and justice to the general destruction of the world, and the wicked race of men who peopled it, by that flood, of which *Moses* the ancient *jewish* writer gives us so particular an account. And what further dreadful convulsions of nature, and what unknown desolations shall break out hereafter, to punish or to destroy the inhabitants of this globe, lies beyond the reach of our reason to foretell.

Known unto God are all our hearts and our works, and all his own ways from the beginning, and those ways of his are managed and conducted towards us, as becomes a wise and righteous governor; sometimes for our trial and warning, and sometimes for our correction and punishment. Can we ever suppose that the blessed God, who loves all the innocent creatures that he has made, would place them in such a dangerous habitation, where many of them must necessarily be exposed to so many horrible accidents and mortal devastations, even while they continued in their own innocence and in his favour.

If we consult the writings of *Moses*, the *jewish* prophet, and *Peter*, the christian apostle, we shall find that they supposed the great creator to have laid up stores and magazines of ruin and destruction within the bowels of this earth, which he foresaw would be inhabited by a criminal race of beings: And he fore-ordained to break open his dreadful treasures of flood and fire at proper seasons, to drown and to burn



the world together with the inhabitants thereof. When "all flesh had corrupted it's way before God, as *Moses* speaks, he appointed to destroy man whom he had created: He opened the windows or flood-gates of heaven, poured down rain incessantly upon the earth for forty days and forty nights; and the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and all in whose nostrils were the breath of life upon the dry land died," except eight persons, *Gen. vii. 11—24*. And the christian writer tells us, that "the world, which at that time was overflowed with water, perished; but that the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same divine word and providence are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. Then the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the heavens shall be dissolved with a great noise, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up," *2 Pet. iii. 6, 7, 10*.

Now the great God, who appointed such prodigious quantities both of water and fire to be reserved in the bowels of the earth, and among the clouds of heaven, for such a foreseen day of general destruction, when the sins of the inhabitants should come to their full measure, did also doubtless prepare his materials, and appoint the days when all the lesser storms and hurricanes, earthquakes and floods, lightnings and thunders, and convulsions of nature, should break out and answer those particular seasons, when he intended to manifest his terrors to mankind, and to shew his wrath in their wretchedness and destruction: And he treasured up his magazines of wind, and flood, and fire in the air and earth for these purposes. Is this a habitation which God has made for the residence of pure and holy beings? Is this such a peaceful place as a kind creator would have formed and built for innocent creatures? Or does he manage these several scenes of our globe, as though those who dwell upon it maintained their primitive purity and his original favour? It is absurd to imagine such a conduct of a God so wise, so righteous and so merciful.

Consideration II. Let us take a survey of the herbs and plants and trees, and all the vegetable beings which grow out of this earth, together with the brute animals which are found on the surface of it, and we shall find more reasons to conclude that MAN the chief inhabitant is by no means such a creature, so innocent, and so much a favourite of heaven, as he must needs be when he came first out of his maker's hand.

It must be granted here again, that the wisdom and goodness of the creator have displayed themselves in a divine and astonishing manner in the animal and the vegetable world, beyond the utmost reach of our thoughts or our praises: But still we may have leave to enquire, whether among the numerous herbs and flowers, which are fitted for the support and delight of man, there would have been any noxious plants or fruits of mortal and malignant juice, appointed to grow out of the earth, without some plain signal mark or caution set upon them, if man had continued in his innocent state? Can we suppose that amongst the roots, the herbs, and the trees which are good for food, the great God would have suffered mischief, malady and deadly poison to spring up here and there, without any sufficient distinction that man might know how to avoid them? This is the case in our present world; and disease, anguish and death have entered into the bowels and veins of multitudes by an innocent and fatal mistake of these pernicious things for proper food.

It is granted indeed, that when *Moses* had dressed and furnished his garden in paradise, with all manner of vegetable fruits and pleasures for the new and holy creature MAN, he tells us of a tree in that garden which was called the "tree of knowledge,"

ledge," and it was certain death to taste it. *Gen. ii. 10, 16, 17.* But then man had express warning given him to avoid the danger: DEATH was, as it were, inscribed upon that tree in plain characters, and it was wilful iniquity for him to make so dangerous an experiment. Nor would there have been any poisonous or hurtful plant suffered to grow upon this earth, if the inhabitants of it had continued in their primitive holiness, without some natural mark set upon it, or some divine caution to avoid it. God loves the pure and innocent works of his hands better than to expose them to such unavoidable perils and miseries, and such mortal dangers and deaths; if they continue in their original innocence.

Again, let me enquire whether this earth in almost every soil would have produced such a quantity of briars, thorns, and thistles, and various weeds, which are so destructive to corn, the food of man, and create so much vexation to the painful tillers of the field, if man had been innocent, and the earth his habitation had never been accursed for any crime of the inhabitant? *Moses*, the famous *jewish* writer, mentions this very thing as a divine curse for the sin of man.

Let us arise to the animal or brutal world. There are many creatures indeed made for the service and pleasure of mankind, and they are easily governed to answer his purposes in human life. But are there not many sorts of animals also that weak man can neither govern nor resist, and by which all his race are exposed to miserable wounds and anguish, and death, whensoever they meet them?

Would there have been any such creatures in our world as bears and tygers, wolves and lions, animated with such fierceness and rage, and armed with such destructive and bloody teeth and talons, if man the supreme creature in it had not sinned and fallen out of his maker's kindest care? Or would these murderous animals ever have been let into a paradise made for the habitation of innocent beings; and that without power given to those innocents to govern and restrain them, or without sufficient art or speed to escape them? Would the children of men, innocent and holy, have ever been formed to be the living prey of these devourers? Were the life and limbs of such holy creatures made to become heaps of agonizing carnage? Or would their flesh and bones have been given up to be crushed and churned between the jaws of panthers and leopards, sharks and crocodiles, by land and sea? Are sensible, rational and innocent beings fit morsels for savages of the brutal kind, and were they first made for this purpose by a God of wisdom and goodness? Let brutes be contented to prey upon their fellow-brutes, but let man be their lord and ruler, and free from their assaults: And so he was, says the *jewish* lawgiver, in his first and innocent estate.

Give me leave to proceed in these enquiries. If man were not a fallen sinful creature fit for punishment, would there have been so many tribes of the serpent and viper kind armed with deadly venom to bite and kill man? Would such subtle and active mischiefs have been made and sent to dwell in a world which was all holy and happy? And would the race of all these murderous and destructive brutes of every kind have been propagated for six thousand years in any province of God's dominion, unless he had foreseen at first, that his intellectual creatures there would have rebelled against him, and deserved to be given up to their power and rage?

What are the immense flights of locusts which darken the sky, and lay the fields desolate? What are the winged armies of hornets and muscatoes, that make a pleasant land almost intolerable by the incessant and restless attacks they make on mankind with their painful stings? If they are found in the scorching climates of *Africa*, and in the sultry parts of the *East* and *West-Indies*, yet one would think such noisome



and venomous flies should not swarm upon the hills of *Russia*, and infest the polar regions, if the creator had not designed them for the vexation of the nations on all sides of the globe.

What are the innumerable hosts of caterpillars which in a night or two turn a garden into a desert, but so many messengers of the anger of God, against a sinful race of beings that dwell upon this earth? And since we are neither able to resist or subdue their power, nor avoid their plunder, we may certainly infer, that we are not such favourites of heaven as God at first had made us, while we are exposed to the endless attacks, insults and triumphs of such little despicable insects, and yet deadly and destructive enemies. The troublesome and pernicious tribes of animal nature both of larger and lesser size, which are fellow-commoners with us upon this great globe, together with our impotence to prevent or escape their mischiefs, is a sufficient proof that we are not sinless creatures, nor in the full favour and love of the God that made us, and that he has quartered his armies, his legions among us, as princes do in a rebellious province.

Perhaps, it will be replied here, that these mischiefs of the animal and vegetable world, these poisonous plants and vipers, and savage beasts of prey may be permitted to dwell in our earth, for the trial of it's inhabitants in a state of probation, even though they were innocent; especially since it is certain that their fatal effects do sometimes now fall upon good and pious men, during their situation here, which is a state of trial: But God can reward the sufferers in a future state, and thus absolve or vindicate his justice, wisdom and goodness in permitting them to be thus exposed in the present life. To this I answer two ways,

Answer I. There is a great difference to be made between innocent creatures in a state of probation, and sinful degenerate creatures in the same state. These mischievous and painful events, which now fall upon sinful mankind, would have been all righteous whether they had been in a state of trial or no; but most of them plainly declare the punishing hand of God, as well as the probation of creatures, and therefore it supposes them not to be innocent. Whereas, if these plagues had abounded in a world of innocence, many of the wise and holy inhabitants who had suffered these mischiefs, even if they were sent for their trial, would scarcely have found sufficient reason to rejoice in their situation, and to give thanks to their maker, as every innocent being would surely have occasion and reason to do. Serpents and bears, stings and poisons are terrible trials for pure innocents.

Answer II. The state of probation for innocent creatures, would not have included death in it, a violent and bloody, or a lingering and painful death, such as flows from some of these plagues and mischiefs upon the earth. The destruction of our nature, our dying and returning to dust, is supposed by the ancient *hebrew* historian to be a curse of God for the sin of man: And when once life is forfeited among the whole race of mankind, and they are all subject and devoted to death by some universal degeneracy, then a painful death may properly become a part of the further trial of such creatures who are to rise again: And any who are pious sufferers among them, and who behave well in dying, may be rewarded by a happy resurrection. This may be appointed with much more propriety, than that a painful death should be made a part of the trial of innocent creatures, who had never forfeited life, nor were ever legally subjected to death. In the case of dying infants, this appears with greater evidence, as I shall shew afterward.

Upon

Upon the whole therefore, such sort of noxious and destructive plants and animals do not seem to be made for a world of innocent, sensible and intellectual beings, to vex, and disturb, to poison and destroy them\*.

Objection. But did not God renew to *Noah* the dominion over the brute creatures?

Answer. Not in such an ample manner as he first possessed it; but only the fear of man was to fall upon the brutes: Now this does not sufficiently preserve men from their outrage and mischief; whereas in the innocent state, no man would have been poisoned or torn by serpents or lions as now. See question VIII. section 6.

Consideration III. The manner of the introduction of the race of man into life and being in this world, is another proof that we are not the innocent favourites of heaven. Can we ever imagine the great and good God would have appointed intellectual animals to be propagated in such a way as should necessarily give such exquisite pain and anguish to the mothers who produce them, if we had been all accounted in his eyes a race of holy and sinless beings? And if the contagion or crime had not been universal, why should such acute pangs attend almost every female parent in bringing their off-spring into the light of life? Are not the multiplied sorrows with which the daughters of *Eve* continually bring forth their young, a pretty evident token that they are not in their original state of favour with that God who created them, and pronounced a blessing upon them in their propagation†.

The *jewish* lawgiver in the beginning of his history tells us, that "God blessed the first man and woman that he made, and bid them be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it;" *Gen. i. 28.* and the same ancient writer within a page or two tells us, that these "multiplied sorrows" in the bearing and birth of children are pronounced as a curse from an offended God: chapter iii. 16. Surely the curse is not as old as the blessing: But sin and sorrow came in together, and spread a wide curse over the birth of man, which before stood only under a divine benediction: Nor is the blessing on human propagation quite taken away, though pains of child-bearing are added to it. Daily observation and experience prove that the blessing of propagation repeated to *Noah*, *Gen. ix. 6.* did not take away that curse. See question VIII. at the end.

Consideration IV. Let us consider in the next place how the generality of mankind are preserved in life. Some few there are indeed whom divine providence has raised to riches and plenty, and their food is daily provided for them without care or toil; but the millions of human creatures in all the nations of the earth are forced to support a wretched life by hard labour of the body, and intense and grievous fatigue of their joints and limbs, and all their natural powers. What dreadful risques both of life and limbs do multitudes run through in order to purchase their own necessary food,

\* As there happened an intire revolution in the complexion and qualities of the minds of the first pair, of mankind, so to me, there appear to be evident indications of a designed change and alteration of the material world, and the nature of the animals and vegetables which subsist on this globe, from what they were when God pronounced "every thing good" that he had made. Doctor *Cheyne* in his essay of "health and long life."

† The author has been censured here for not dropping a tear over the fair sex under their sorrows and cute pains: But he imagines he has been dropping tears in every page, and that over every part of mankind, and on them in particular in several paragraphs of this book.



food, and to support their young helpless families at home? What waste of the hours of sweet repose at midnight, as well as long and slavish and painful toils of the day, do multitudes sustain, in order to procure daily nourishment? It is by the sweat of their brows they obtain their bread; it is by a continual exhausting their vital spirits, that many of them are forced to relieve their own hunger, and to keep off death, as well as to feed their young off-spring that otherwise would be born merely to perish.

If we survey the lower tribes of mankind, even in *Great Britain*, in a land of freedom and plenty, a climate temperate and fruitful, a country which abounds with corn and fruits, and is stored with beasts and fowl, and fish, in rich variety for food, what a hard shift do ten thousand families make to keep out famine and support life? Their whole time is devoured with the labours of the flesh, and their souls ever beset and almost eaten up with gnawing cares and anxieties, to answer this important question, "what shall I eat and what shall I drink" even in the poorest and the coarsest manner? But if we send our thoughts to the sultry regions of *Africa*, or the frost and snows of *Norway*, to the rocks and deserts of *Lapland* and northern *Tartary*, what a hideous and frightful thing is human life in those climates? How is the rational nature of man almost lost between their slavery, their brutality, and their incessant toils and hardships? They are treated like brutes by their lords, and they live like dogs and asses among labours, and wants, hunger and weariness, blows and burdens without end. Did God appoint this for innocents?

Perhaps, you will say, there is a pleasure in eating and drinking, which answers to the pain of procuring our food: But alas! Can this short pleasure of a few minutes, in trolling a few morsels down our throats, or washing the gullet with plenty of liquids, be supposed to give a full recompense for the incessant labours of life? Does it bear any proportion to the length of toil, pain and hazard, and the tiresome fatigues of our spirits and our limbs, wherewith the provisions of life are procured? *Moses* acquaints us indeed, that man even in his innocent and blessed state was placed in a noble and lovely garden, and was appointed to dress it: This was no curse, but a wise appointment of the God of nature by intermingled labour and exercise to preserve our health and vigour. But when the same writer comes to introduce the toil and fatigues we are forced to sustain, in order to secure us from starving, when he "speaks of eating our bread in the sweat of our brows," *Gen. iii. 17-19.* he acknowledges this to be another of the curses of God for the sin of man, and it is scattered all round the globe\*.

#### Consideration V.

\* It is strange that any man should say, in this sentence of God, *Gen. iii. 15-19.* "no curse is pronounced upon either *Adam's* body, soul or posterity; that the sorrow of child-bearing is not inflicted as a curse; that the labours of life were increased, but not as a curse; and that this death was not a curse, &c." I would fain ask, what is a curse, if some natural evil pronounced and executed upon a person, or thing, be not so, especially when it is pronounced upon the account of sin, and comes from God himself as supreme governor and judge? And even the curse on the ground falls properly on the man who tills it.

It is granted, that all these may be sanctified by the covenant of grace to good people, and turned to their advantage. The wisdom of God can turn "curses into blessings," *Gen. i. 20. Deut. xxiii. 5.* Yet the original pronouncement and infliction of these evils was designed as a curse, or punishment for sin, as it is written, *Gal. iii. 10.* "Curse is every one who continueth not in all things," &c. And I think it will appear evidently to every one who with common sense and without prejudice reads the history of the fall of man in *Gen. iii. 16-19.* And that death was designed as a curse on man for sin, is evident; for *Christ* suffered this curse for us, *Gal. iii. 13.*

Consideration V. Consider the character, temper and quality of mankind in general, even the multitudes and millions of mankind in all nations, with regard to religion and virtue, and then it will be hard to persuade ourselves that these are creatures, who enjoy the favour of their maker as his children, or bear the image of their common father in knowledge and goodness, as his original and native offspring ought to do.

I grant there are here and there some few persons who are restored to some degrees of conformity to him that made them; they are become his children by repentance and return to God, by a divine change passed upon their natures, and they enjoy a share of his special love: But the bulk of the world are of another stamp and character, and sufficiently shew there is some sinful and fatal contagion spread through the inhabitants of this province of God's dominion. *John* the apostle, in one of his letters, tells us, that there are few who "are born of God, as new creatures, but the whole world lies in wickedness." 1 *John* v. 19.

Would the blessed God make a world of intelligent creatures so ignorant and thoughtless of himself, and so insolent and rebellious against him as man now is? Can we think of that gross and stupid ignorance of the true God which reigns through vast tracts of land in *Asia*, *Africa*, and *America*, and the thick darkness as well as toil and slavery which buries all the heathen countries, and reduces them yet further almost to brutes and savages; can we think of the abominable idolatries, the lewd and the cruel rites of worship, which have been spread through some whole nations; the impious, the wicked and ridiculous superstitions which are practised among the greatest part of the world, and yet believe the blessed God would put such wretched and polluted workmanship out of pure hands?

Can we survey the bold and desperate impiety and profaneness, the swearing and cursing, and wild blasphemy that is practised and pronounced daily and nightly, among vast multitudes in those countries which know and profess the true God; can we behold that almost universal neglect of God, his fear, and his worship, and of the obedience due to him, which is found even among those inhabitants of this our world, who say they believe in God, and yet imagine that those wretches love their maker, that they wear his image, and are conformable to his will, as his original creature must and ought to be?

Nor are mankind only negligent of their duty to God, but they seem to have abandoned their duties to their fellow-creatures also. Can we think of the perpetual practices of fraud and villainy in the commerce of mankind, the innumerable instances of oppression and cruelty which run through the world; the pride and humour of the great, the wrath and ambition of most princes, their wild and mad extravagances of crime and folly, as well as their boundless insolence and tyranny over their subjects, and the endless iniquities and mischiefs that arise from envy, malice and revenge practised among lower people; and yet suppose that man was ever made with these vices in him, and these disorders around him, by that wisdom and goodness that created him? If we take a survey of the impure scenes of lust and intemperance

It is granted also, that God might in *Noah's* time take off, perhaps, some part of the curse from the ground, *Gen.* v. 29. and bless it with greater fruitfulness; he might renew his blessing on propagation, *Gen.* ix. 1. and many other blessings may be added: But still the curses of hard toil and sweating, of painful child-bearing, and of death, may be, and are actually continued through all generations, though some blessings may be mingled with them: And this is sufficient to answer all these objections. See more, question VIII. at the end.



rance and drunken madness which defy the day-light, and pollute the darkness; if we think of the monstrous barbarities which are continually committed by men in the christian inquisitions of *Spain*, *Portugal* and *Italy*, and among all the brutal and wicked tribes of heathenism, the *african* savages, and the *american* cannibals, who kill and roast their fellow-creatures, and eat up men as they eat bread; can we still imagine that mankind is a race of beings, who abide in their own native and original state, such as they came from the hands of their maker?

Shall it be said in opposition to this view of things, that it is not the greatest part of mankind that are so shamefully ignorant and so abominably vile? I answer,

Answer. That in matters of religion the greatest part of the world are gross idolaters; they adore the souls of the dead for gods, or they worship the sun and moon, or beasts, birds, images, names, fabled gods, stocks and stones, or any thing but the true God: They neither know their maker, nor love, nor worship him. There are many whole nations that practise abominable vices by general custom and consent, by the approbation of their wise men, and by long tradition, if not by the authority of their laws. This has been abundantly demonstrated by learned writers of the present age, both from the modern travels of the inquisitive, and from ancient histories, when they would shew in what need mankind stood of a divine revelation.

In matters of morality, though the bulk of mankind are not guilty of the very vilest crimes with regard to their fellow-creatures, yet if we consider the numerous corrupt inclinations and sinful passions that sway all the world, the lesser vices and irregularities that work and run through the hearts and lives even of the best and most civilized parts of the universe; if we observe the strange blindness of the understandings of men in divine things, the unfaithfulness of conscience, the unwillingness to know any mortifying and self-denying truths and duties, the general prevalence of appetite and sinful desires over the powers and the rules of reason, and that not only among the unthinking multitude, but even where reason is consulted and makes it's feeble remonstrances; if we consider the universal disorder among the faculties of mankind; and the violation of that harmony and order wherein consists innocence, virtue and peace: If we add to all this heap of confusion, their general thoughtlessness and disregard of God, and their gross defects in benevolence to their neighbours, it will appear plain enough, that there is not one upon earth that is truly righteous and without sin; and it is more abundantly evident, that mankind are far from a state of innocence and perfect virtue: They are fallen from God, and have lost that likeness to their maker, and that love of him, and those principles of universal virtue which doubtless were implanted in them by so wise, so righteous, so kind, and benevolent a creator.

That far the greatest number of men are evil, or greatly criminal, was a known sentiment of the ancients. The wiser and more considerate heathens saw and bewailed it, though they knew not how to account for it. *Οἱ πολλοὶ κακοί*, "most men are wicked," was the sentence of a *greek* philosopher, and the common opinion of the most intelligent observers of mankind. The poets were generally loose enough themselves, but they were wise enough to observe the universal wickedness of mankind and agree entirely in this obvious and general truth. *Virgil* tells us, that few are virtuous enough to escape the punishments of the other world: He brings in a ghost telling his son,

" *Pauci læta arva tenemus.* "

And

And in this life the character of human nature among the poets is this :

"Nitimur in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata."  
Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas,  
Audax omnia perpeti.

HOR.

And that vice is early and universal he says,

"Nam vitiis nemo sine nascitur."

And when this author speaks of young men in general, he gives them this character.

"Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus asper."

*Seneca* says just the same,

"Pejora juvenes faciliè præcepta audiunt."

And *Juvenal* abounds in this account of human nature ;

"Rari quippe boni : Numero vix sunt totidem quot  
Thebarum portæ, vel divitis ostia Nili.  
Quæ tam festa dies ut cesset prodere furem ?

— Ad mores natura recurrit  
Damnatos, fixa & mutari nescia. —  
Quisnam hominum est quem tu contentum videris uno  
Flagitio ? — Dociles imitandis  
Turpibus & pravis omnes sumus."

JUV.

They own indeed there was once a golden age, or a state of innocence at first. Their reason told them, that the great God must and did make man upright and good ; but they imagined that mankind did degenerate by degrees in successive ages, and at last grew universally wicked. This is asserted not only by satirical writers, but by those of a gentler disposition and a softer pen. *Ovid* and *Manilius* were no satyrists, yet they speak the very same language :

"Protinus erupit venæ pejoris in ævum  
Omne nefas : Fugere pudor, verumque fidesque.  
In quorum subiere locum fraudesque dolique  
Insidiæque, & vis, & amor sceleratus habendi :  
Victa jacet pietas, terras Astræa reliquit."

OVID.

"Perque tot ætates hominum, tot tempora & annos,  
Tot bella, & varios etiam sub pace labores,  
Cum fortuna fidem quærat, vix invenit usquam.



At quanta est scelerum moles per sæcula cuncta?  
 In populo scélus est: Et abundant cuncta furore,  
 Et fas atque nefas mistum, legesque per ipsas  
 Sævit nequities."

MANIL.

The sense of all which is thus represented in *english*.

"There are very few who die that go to heaven, or a state of happiness. We are always desiring and pursuing forbidden things. Mankind is bold to rush into forbidden wickedness; nor is any man born without vices: Young men most readily hearken to evil counsels; they are soft as wax to be moulded into vice, but rough and rugged to their best monitors. Good men are very few, scarce as many as the gates of the city *Thebes*; or the mouths of the *Nile*. What day is there that does not shew us some new malefactors? Nature recurs to it's own wicked manners, is fixed in it, and knows not how to change. How few persons will you find contented with one sort of wickedness? We are all very forward to learn and imitate whatever is base or wicked. After the golden age, and some few following seasons, all manner of iniquity broke out: Modesty, truth, and faithfulness are quite fled away, in whose place came deceit, mischief, violence and wicked covetousness. Piety lay subdued, and justice left the earth. And through so many ages of men, so many murderous wars, and labours, and toils, in time of peace, there is scarce such a thing as honesty to be found; but through all ages there is an abundant load of crimes: Wickedness runs through the people: Madness rages, fills and over-whelms all things. Right and wrong all are mingled, and iniquity reigns even through the very laws of men."

This was the common complaint of the most observing heathens in their age, as it is our's in the present day.

Consideration VI. Not only those who are grown up to mature age, but even mankind in it's younger years, before it is capable of proper moral actions, discovers the principles of iniquity and the seeds of sin. What young ferments of spite and envy, what native wrath and rage sometimes are found in the little hearts of infants, and sufficiently discovered by their little hands, and their eyes, and their watchful countenances, even before they have learned to speak, or to know good and evil? What additional crimes of lying and deceit, what obstinacy and perverseness proceed to blemish their younger years \*?

How

\* Here our discourse is at once confronted by bringing in the words of our Saviour, *Matth. xviii. 3*. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Little children say they, are here made the patterns of humility, meekness, and innocence; and in several other places of scripture, a state of childhood is represented as innocent, meek and humble; and therefore they have no such native vices. I answer this objection by granting,

Answer. That children appear to be of a much meeker and milder temper than grown persons, because they have much fewer temptations to vices of various kinds than grown persons meet with: Their inward vices are seldom awakened and provoked so much as they are in advancing years.

Let it be further observed, that this humility of children which is recommended in this text, is their freedom from that ambition which possessed the disciples, when they sought "who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

I grant

How little knowledge or thought of God, their creator and governor, is found among children even when they begin to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong? What an utter disregard of him that made them, and of the duties they owe to him? How hard is it to teach them to know their maker, and to obey him? And no wonder it is so in children, since men and women are just the same.

Yet, farther, how little prevailing sense or practice of what is morally right and good is seen among them, when they begin act agreeably to their own childish and youthful age? How contrary is their conduct to the laws of reason, which are the laws of their maker? How do the evil passions of nature, and irregular appetites and vices of the will prevail in them, and over them betimes? Even from their first capacity of acting as moral creatures in the world; how are they led away to practise falsehood and injury to their play-fellows, and that sometimes with insolence, cruelty and revenge? How often are they engaged in bold instances of disobedience to parents or teachers, and in acts of shameful intemperance? They do evil with greediness both to themselves and to their fellow-creatures: Nor do I think there is one youth in the world who has not, on particular occasions, manifested some early inclinations to one vice or another. Would this have been the case, if mankind had been just such creatures as they came from their maker's hand?

Nor can these vicious propensities be imputed to any ill influences of custom, or education, or example; for many of these things appear in children before they can take any notice of any such examples set before them, or are capable of such imitation. And it might be added, that even in the best of families, where good examples stand round them, where children from their youngest years are instructed in their duty, and encouraged and excited to practise virtue and religion, and persuaded to it by all the motives of authority and love, and led by many examples as well as by precepts, yet their hearts naturally run astray from God. The greatest part of them in their childhood visibly follow the corrupt influences of sense, appetite and passion, and in very early years they manifest the inward evil principles of pride, obstinacy and disobedience: And multitudes, even in such families, grow up to practise many vices, and to publish the iniquity and shame of their nature, in opposition to all the influences of instruction and advice, example and authority. And if all children were utterly untaught and unrestrained, even in the years of childhood, these iniquities would break out and discover themselves with much more evidence and shame: This appears in particular families, even in such countries and such towns which are civilized by learning and politeness. There are a thousand instances wherein this is evident in fact; that where the education of children is neglected, the whole generation becomes vicious: So among the heathens, there are whole nations wicked, perhaps without an exception.

## D. d 2

## Consideration VII.

I grant also, that young children in general are really meek and innocent, in comparison with persons grown up, who have increased in pride and malice; and this is enough for such representations in scripture.

But after all, I ask, are not these sad descriptions which I have given of the vicious tempers of many children, just and true? Does not daily observation discover them? And if so, whence does this evil temper arise, which at any time discovers itself in any of these little creatures? What is the root that brings forth such early bitter fruit? I say, whence can it proceed, or what is it, but some innate evil disposition that they bring into the world with them? This will appear more evidently in the following pages, wherein other pretended causes are excluded and refuted.



Consideration VII. To give yet a fuller confirmation of this truth, that mankind have a sinful and corrupt nature in them, let it be observed, that where persons have not only been educated from their youngest years in all the practices of piety, virtue and goodness, as far as parents could influence them, but where young persons themselves have taken something of a religious turn betimes, and have sought after true wisdom and piety, what wretched and perpetual hindrances do they find within themselves? What inward oppositions are working in the heart, and too often interrupt this holy course of life? What vanity of mind, what sinful appetites, what sensuality and forgetfulness of God, what evil affections, what vicious thoughts and wishes, and tendencies of heart rise up in contradiction to their honest and professed purposes of virtue and holiness, and lead them astray too often from their duty both to God and man?

Even some of the best of men, who have observed their own hearts, are forced to cry out, "Oh, wretched creature that I am!" What vicious principles do I find in my members warring against reason and the law of my mind, and bringing me too often into captivity to sin?" Whether St. Paul complained thus concerning himself or no in his letter to the *Romans*, chapter vii. verses 23, 24. or whether he spoke it in the name of mere pretenders to religion, yet "as there is not a just man upon earth, that doth good, and never sins;" so I am persuaded, there is not a man who cannot in some measure take up this complaint, that he is sometimes led astray by sense, appetite or passion, in greater or lesser instances, against the better dictates of his mind and conscience: There is not a man who may not mourn over himself in this language, "O, wretched creature indeed! Who shall deliver me" from this native disorder, this inward plague, these evil propensities of my nature? "There is none perfectly righteous; no not one."

I may sum up the argument contained in the three last considerations in this manner, viz.

If great multitudes of mankind are grossly sinful, and if every individual, without exception, is actually a sinner against the law of his creator; if sinful propensities and inclinations appear even in youngest years, and every child becomes an actual sinner almost so soon as it is capable of moral or immoral actions; we have just reason to conclude, there is some original and universal degeneracy spread over the whole race of men from their birth: For it is not to be supposed that the wisdom, equity and goodness of God would ever have produced such a world, wherein every single creature coming out of their maker's hands in their original state of innocence and full power to obey, should be thus defiled by their own wilful and chosen disobedience.

It has been said indeed, in opposition to this argument, that if the first man, even Adam, did fall into sin, though he was made innocent and perfect, then among a million of creatures, every one might sin, though he was made as innocent and as perfect as Adam; and that this is a better account of so universal an apostasy. To which I answer,

Answer. There is indeed a bare possibility of this event: But the improbability that every creature should fall into sin, is in the proportion of a million to one. And I prove it thus,

If a million of creatures were made but in an equal probability to stand or fall; and if all the numbers from one to one million inclusively, were set in a rank, it is plain that it is a million to one that just any single proposed and determined number

ber of all this multitude should fall by sin: Now the total sum is one of these numbers, that is, the last of them, and consequently, in this way of calculation, it is a million to one against the supposition, that the whole number of men should fall.

And yet further, if they were all made in a far greater probability of standing than falling, which the justice and goodness of God seem to require, then it is much more than a million to one, that all should sin against their creator without exception. See therefore the weakness of this objection; though I have read several triumphs, in a few pages, supported only by this argument, which has the proportion of more than a whole million to one against it. And yet this argument will grow still ten thousand times stronger, if we suppose ten thousand millions to have lived since the creation.

It has been said again, if the nature of our first parents was not originally corrupt, who committed the first sin, and occasioned the suffering, neither is my nature originally corrupt, who am no ways concerned in the commission of that sin, but only am thereby subjected to suffering. I answer,

Answer. But if the sin of our first parent laid him under guilt, tainted and defiled his own nature, both soul and body, and I am derived from him as my spring and head, I may be thus defiled also, receiving a taint both in soul and body, from the first criminal, as I have shewn afterwards.

Consideration VIII. It may be further argued, that man is a creature fallen from his original state, because he is so far enfeebled or corrupted, that he has not a ready and practical power\* to perform the law of his maker, which yet continues to be written in his heart by nature. Does not this law of reason, and nature, and conscience, require us to love God with all our heart and soul, to deal with our neighbour as we think it proper he should deal with us, and to govern our own appetites and passions by rules of reason? Does it not require also, that these things must be done in perfection, and without defect, whether they regard God, our neighbour, or ourselves? Doth it not demand that we should adore and honour, fear and trust in the great God that made us, and obey all that we know to be his will, in a perfect manner? Does it not prescribe constant justice, truth and goodness toward our neighbour, without one evil thought, one covetous wish, one envious, or malicious act of the will,

\* Observe, I do not assert here, that man has not a remote, speculative and natural power to obey the law of God: but it is abundantly evident he has not an immediate, proximate and moral or practical power to do it, since not one of all mankind have ever done it. And let it be observed, that it is the want of this moral disposition, this practical power of perfect obedience to the law of God, which I call insufficiency, ability and impotence, as is shewn at large under question XIII. and scripture uses the same language.

And here I desire it may be observed also, that this distinction of sufficient power into natural and moral will solve the objections derived from a pretence, that "God would never continue mankind under such a law which they have not present sufficient power to obey." This is certain matter of fact, that there is a law written in the heart or conscience of man, *Rom. ii. 15.* which requires greater perfection of obedience than man has a practical or moral power to fulfil, though he may have natural powers equal to the command.

I add yet further, that though many men, by the usual aids of divine grace may obey this law of God, so far as is necessary, according to the new covenant, and may obtain the favour of God, yet they cannot fulfil it, so far as to obtain justification or acceptance according to this law, which requires perfect obedience, and curses every one that fails in it. *Rom. ii. 9.* and chapter *iii. 19, 20. Gal. iii. 10.* And this hope of divine aid, and divine acceptance is richly sufficient to encourage our utmost diligence in all the duties of obedience, and secure men from despair, and from the neglect of religion and virtue. Thus it appears, that this impotence of men to fulfil the law perfectly, is no discouragement from the utmost diligence in religion.



will, or the tongue, or the hand, towards him? Does it not demand that our self-government, or our temperance should not indulge one irregular passion, or appetite? And does it not require, that every one of these lower powers should be perfectly subject to reason and conscience? Now is there any man on earth can say, that he has a ready and practical power to perform all these laws which his maker has written in his heart, without any sinful irregularity in thought, word or deed?

Perhaps, you will insist on it still, that man has still within him those faculties of understanding, and will, and affection, which have a natural power to perform these duties; and perhaps you will prove it too, because whensoever, according to any scheme of religion, a man is made holy, he has no new faculties given him, and therefore these natural faculties which he has are sufficient. I answer,

Answer. If any man be made holy, though he has no new faculties given him, yet their vicious propensities are so far subdued or taken away, and the sinful tendencies of all his powers are so far changed into that which is virtuous and holy: But it is evident in our present state in this world, that the propensities of the will and affections to that which is evil, are so much superior and prevalent, that I believe there is no man lives one day without breaking this perfect law of his maker, in thought, word, or deed: And therefore, though by reason of his natural faculties he may have a remote and speculative sufficiency of natural power to obey his maker's law, yet he has no proximate and practical, or moral sufficiency to perform it, by reason of the perverse and sinful bias of his will and affections, and the weak influences of understanding, reason and conscience, which are so easily and continually overcome by sinful appetites and inclinations.

It should be considered further, that the outward temptations to which mankind are exposed all around them in the present state, especially in the vigour and perfection of animal life, are evidently too strong to be effectually and constantly resisted and overcome by these enfeebled faculties of reason and conscience, while, at the same time, his will and affections, as well as his appetites and passions, have a powerful bias and propensity to yield to the temptation, and commit sin.

So that if we take a full survey of all these circumstances in which mankind are now situated, if we consider their strong propensities to evil within their own nature, the powerful temptations to evil that surround them without, and the feeble efforts of their guardian powers, reason and conscience, to resist all these oppositions, and to break through all these impediments; and if we add here to the constant and daily evidence of all this, by the constant and daily sins of mankind, we must be forced to acknowledge, that his moral and practical powers in the present state, are by no means proportionate to the law of God, and to his duties, but vastly inferior to them.

Now, would a wise, a just and a merciful God, who is abundant in goodness, have formed such sensible and intellectual creatures originally by his own hand, in such a wretched estate, that their powers and capacities should be so much below their duties, that they break his law daily and continually, and it may be said, that whatsoever natural faculties they have, yet they have not a ready and practical sufficiency of power to perform it?

Shall it be objected further, that God cannot require more of man than he has given him power to perform, and therefore his law cannot require perfection, if he has not power perfectly to obey it; for the demands of a law must be limited by the powers of the subject, and cannot exceed it. To this I might answer,

Answer I.

Answer I. That the demands of a law must not exceed the powers of an innocent and new-made creature, just as he comes from the hand of God; but when he has some way or other ruined and enfeebled, perverted or broken his original powers, or brought an evil bias into them, may not the law of God still continue to demand such obedience, which he has not a present sufficiency of power to yield or perform? Or I might perhaps better answer thus,

Answer II. That the law of our maker in it's demands must be limited by the original, absolute and natural power of the creature to perform it, which was then also morally and practically sufficient for the purpose; but when a race of beings, by their own folly, have so perverted and discomposed these natural faculties, that they have not an immediate, proximate and practical power to perform the law of God, this does not destroy nor abate the commands of the law of our maker: But they stand in full perfection of authority and demand, since the natural powers are still continued, though our perverse inclinations, which is indeed our moral impotence, are continually carrying us to disobey these commands.

Shall it be said again, though we break the laws of our maker so frequently, yet he knows the weakness of our frame, and he pities and pardons infirm and feeble creatures, where there is any desire to please him, though their disobedience be very frequent. But in answer to this, I would say,

Answer I. First, It is the new covenant, or covenant of grace, which holds forth God as pitying and pardoning his sinful creatures; not the law of creation or innocence, by which all men are condemned for sin.

Answer II. Secondly, I would enquire, did God make such creatures so infirm and feeble in their original state, as that they should so frequently and continually offend their maker, and want forgiveness? Did he give them such a law to govern their actions, as should never, never be fulfilled by any one of them, but should be daily and constantly broken by them; and that the new-made creature should want daily and continual pardon? Would a God, who adjusts the proportions of all things in infinite wisdom, give a law to his creatures which is so disproportionate to their original powers, that even in the state of their creation they are almost under some sort of necessity of breaking it, and stand in need of daily and repeated forgiveness? Does not all this view of things give us abundant conviction that mankind is now a degenerate being, and not such as it was first created by that wise, that righteous, and that merciful God who made it?

If those who are most unwilling to acknowledge this universal and early depravation of man, would look into themselves daily, and observe all the sinful and irregular turns of their own heart, how ready and propense they are to sin and folly in greater or lesser instances, how soon appetite and passion start up in opposition to reason and conscience, how often they prevail over their better sentiments, how frequently the perfect demands of the law of God are broken by them, how thoughtless and forgetful they are of their divine maker and governor, how cold and languishing their affections to what is religious and holy, how little love they have to truth, how little delight in virtue by nature, how averse to commune with God, while they are fond and violent in pursuit of trifles and follies; could any of them think that they are such innocent and holy creatures as God at first had created us, and that they have been such from their childhood or their entrance into the life and state of man? Surely a little more frequent and accurate observation of their own heart would lead them into a better acquaintance with themselves, and convince them feelingly that there was some early degeneracy from the first rectitude of human nature.

Consideration IX.



Consideration IX. Another proof of the degeneracy and fall of mankind is this; that they have not only lost their innocence and the image of their maker, and their original sufficiency of power to fulfil the demands of his law, but they also lie evidently under his actual displeasure, which could not be their primæval state. As we have taken a short view of the sins of men, let us also briefly survey the miseries of mankind, and see whether they look like a race of beings such as their creator made them, or are partakers of his original favour.

Think of the thousands of rational creatures descending hourly to death and the grave. Among these a few are destroyed by some sudden stroke; but far the greater part go thither by painful and slow approaches? Death and the grave, a sore punishment! A dark and shameful prison! Which would never have been made for a race of intellectual creatures, persisting in the beauty and honour of their innocence and virtue, and abiding in the original favour of him that gave them life and being. "Death is the wages of sin;" *Rom. vi. 23.* and from this punishment of sin there is none of the race of men can plead a freedom, or claim a discharge.

If mankind had stood in their original sinless state, can we ever suppose that any of them should have been made sacrifices to death? Much less that every one of them should be bound to certain destruction? And especially that half their race should have been doomed to die before seven years old, that is, before they reach a tenth part of the present age of man, or have done any thing in life worth living for? Did God make rational creatures to destroy them by millions? Were men at first made for death? Methinks every hillock of mortality in a church-yard, and every grave-stone there, assures us that mankind have lost their innocence.

But let us proceed to other miseries that attend us in life-time, many of which end in death and dissolution, and all hasten us down to the grave.

Think next of the multitudes that are racked day and night on their couches, with extreme torture, by the gout and stone, the cholic and rheumatism, and all manner of acute and painful diseases; and then say, are these the torments which a merciful God could ever contrive for a sinless creature? Think of the dismal and destructive scenes of warfare and bloodshed, that have one time or another overspread all nations. Does not nature furnish this world with woes enough, or does not mankind die fast enough, but they must wound and slaughter each other? Cast your thoughts over a field of battle, where thousands of such noble creatures as man are destroyed like brutes, are slain by mutual hatred, and perish by sharp and bloody strokes, and the fatal engines of death; and many thousands more lie on the cold ground, with their flesh and limbs battered and torn, wounded and panting in extreme anguish, and die by degrees: Are these such scenes of innocence and peace as mankind were made for? Are these the signals of their maker's love, or of their own original virtue?

Yet again, let us send our thoughts through the long ranks and files of war. What unknown multitudes are bred up to this bloody trade, and sell their lives daily for the price of a few pence, or for a morsel of meat and sustenance. Multitudes are driven by their princes against their will into the wars, or dragged on by their leaders to destruction and death. What millions are constrained to stand the volley of small shot in the field of battle, or to venture up to the mouths of cannon in the siege of a town or city? They are forced to hazard their limbs and their lives, and even their eternal interests, by fighting against they know not who, and destroying men they not why. They are put under a necessity of killing their fellow-creatures,

or

or being killed by them, because wild and vicious princes quarrel about the bounds of their dominion, or about some trifles of state and impertinencies of honour. Some of them who have any remains of conscience, are forced to fight against their own best interests of liberty and property, as well as against the interest of God and goodness. Whole nations are thus appointed to slaughter by the tyrannical laws of those that rule over them in various parts of the world; and sometimes there are but very few in a whole country that are excused from bearing arms and entering into these dismal and deathful circumstances, when their emperors shall tell them that their humour or pleasure requires it. Would this have been the fate of mankind if they had stood in perfect innocence, or if all nations were now born in their original purity?

Think of the vast numbers that are swallowed up in the mighty waters by the rage of stormy winds and seas, which are roused to destroy mortals, and pronounce aloud the wrath of heaven. Review a little what immense multitudes have been swept away by the pestilence, or have had their nature and life worn out by the long and tedious agonies of famine? Would famine and pestilence, with all the dismal train of lingering horrors which attend them, have been ever made for innocent creatures, to have thus swept away whole nations of them, of every age and sex, men, women, and children, without distinction?

Think yet again, what numbers of mankind have been crushed into misery and death, in their own dwellings, and buried there by earthquakes, or have had all their bones bruised, their limbs disjointed and broken, and their flesh painfully battered by the fall of houses, and been buried alive in the ruins of whole towns and villages, while their neighbours have been burned or drowned in multitudes, by the dismal eruptions of fire and water, or destroyed terribly by deluges of liquid fire, breaking out of the earth? Survey these scenes of horror, and then say, would a God of goodness and justice treat innocent creatures at this rate, or expose them to these formidable mischiefs?

Carry your thoughts over the seas to the country of cannibals and other savages, where by the custom of nations, thousands of their conquered enemies, or prisoners of war, are sometimes cruelly put to death, to pave the road to their own palace with their skulls, or they are offered in sacrifice to their idols; sometimes they are roasted in slow fires, as I before hinted, and tortured and eaten by their barbarous conquerors: Add this to all the former miseries, and then say, whether this world does not look like a province half-forfaken of its gracious governor, or almost given up to mischief and misery.

Some perhaps will say here, it is easy to account for a multitude of these miseries, without any universal degeneracy or corruption of human nature. It is but a small part of mankind who are overwhelmed by earthquakes, who are drowned in the seas, who are destroyed by war or famine, who are racked with long and terrible distempers, who are eaten by savages, or put to death by the hands of violence and cruelty; and perhaps these who suffer peculiar afflictions are punished for their own personal iniquities.

Answer. Take a just survey of all the persons who have fallen under these miseries, and there is not the least reason to conclude they have all been sinners above others. Do not the calamities of war, and famine, and pestilence, and earthquakes, and inundations, &c. spread promiscuously without distinction through a whole country at once, and involve the best and worst of men in the same misery and ruin? And is there any ground to imagine, that those spreading devastations make any distinction



inction between greater and lesser sinners? No, by no means. It is sufficiently evident that all persons are liable to them, and whole nations at once suffer by them. Such is the universal degeneracy of human nature, that wheresoever these calamities come, they find none innocent; and it is the general situation of degenerate mankind, under just displeasure of the God that made them, which exposes them all to these destructions.

But to proceed in a survey of the miseries of mankind. Think of the innumerable common misfortunes which attend human life; look into the bills of mortality, observe what multitudes perish by these accidents in one city every week, and infer what a much larger number of these accidents injure the health, the ease, the limbs of mankind, and fill their lives with pain, though they are not brought immediately to the grave. Think of the mischiefs which are continually plotting and contriving in all the towns and villages of the world, whereby perhaps one half of the race of men try to defraud, circumvent, and do injury and mischief to their neighbours; and the bad and the good suffer promiscuously in this world in their possessions and properties, in their comforts of life, in their peace, in their health, and in all that is dear to them. Take a view of these extensive and reigning vices and miseries, and then say, whether this world be not a part of the creation of God, which bears plain and signal tokens of the frowns and displeasure of its maker.

It would add much to the heap of human misery, if we should consider the cutting sorrows which arise from the daily loss of our dearest comforts. What groans and heart-aches and wailings of the living surround the pillows of dying friends and dearer children? What symptoms of piercing and painful distress attend their remains when they are conveyed to the grave? And by such losses all the comforts of future life become disrelishing, and every new scene of sorrow is imbittered with double gall.

Let it be observed, that in the sorrows, miseries and deaths of mankind round the world, especially in the more civilized part of it, there is scarce one person sick, or in pain, miserable or dying, but several others sustain a considerable share of misery by the strong ties of nature, or of interest, the dear bonds of friendship, and the tender and sympathizing powers which are mingled in our composition. This diffuses a personal calamity through whole families, this multiplies human sorrows and miseries into an endless number, and makes us justly enquire, can all this be contrived to torment innocence and holiness, or to punish creatures who continue such as God made them at first?

It would still swell the load, if we bring in the many teasing vexations and cutting disappointments which arise from the falsehood of pretended friends, and from the cruelty of kindred, from whom we expected nothing but benevolence and love, together with the everlasting disquietudes that are rising in some families hourly from little crossing occurrences of life. Can this be a state of happiness, where we meet with perpetual contradiction to our opinions and to our wills, which awaken the soul too often into rage and impatience, and ruffle the spirits of most men?

Add to all this the inward anguish that springs from all our own uneasy and unruly passions of every kind: And where is the breast that has not some of these uneasy passions born with it, and reigning in it, or at least frequently making their assaults upon our peace? Bring in here all the wrath and resentment kindled in the hearts of men, all the envy and malice that burns within, all the imaginary fears and the real terrors of future distress coming upon us, all the rage and despair of lost blessings that were put within our hopes, and all the vicious and ungovernable ferments of animal

animal nature, which torment the spirit all the day, and forbid our nightly repose. Would these things ever have happened if man had continued in favour with his maker, and had not been almost abandoned to his own folly, and in a great measure given up to misery?

Suppose it should be objected here against all this reasoning, in some such manner as this: It is granted that men may make sorrows for themselves, and may be punished by their follies, if they chuse to create their own miseries: But let us compare together all the real necessary sorrows which any man suffers, and the comforts which he enjoys, and when we have put them into the balance, let us remember, that so far as these comforts reach, they will answer for an equal share of sorrows and calamities, and absolve the justice of God from treating his innocent creatures amiss. Then all the over-balancing sorrows may be esteemed but necessary even for an innocent race of beings to sustain, in a state of trial, in order to future rewards or punishments: And the great God well knows how to reward all that over-balance of sufferings hereafter, which every man sustains here beyond the proportion of his comforts. In answer to this,

Answer. I would survey the sinful and wretched inhabitants of this world round the globe, and then humbly inquire, doth one quarter of mankind behave so well in this world in their state of trial, as to give any observing person reason to expect, that they shall ever partake of rewards hereafter? Is there found among mankind such a dutiful and obedient conduct towards God, or such a life of strict virtue and goodness towards their neighbour, as to entitle one fourth part of men to the rewards of futurity, and consequently to any equal recompence hereafter, for the former over-balance of their sorrows here? And if not, how then shall this same over-balance of calamities and miseries be accounted for? It is confessed that it was inflicted on them as innocent creatures in a state of trial, and therefore justice requires that they should have a recompence for these over-balancing sorrows, which yet they are never likely to receive.

Upon the whole therefore we cannot well impute the superior sorrows of mankind merely to such a state of probation; but they are rather to be accounted for as the effects of some universal degeneracy, and the just displeasure of the righteous creator and governor of this world.

But to make this appear yet plainer, I proceed to the next consideration.

Consideration X. Not only those who are grown up in the practice of iniquity, who may be supposed to be punished for their own sins and follies, but even all mankind in their earliest infancy are under some tokens of the displeasure of their maker, before they become actual and personal transgressors, before they know any thing of moral good or evil, or can come into a state of trial.

In the very youngest hours of life, before children can be said to perform rational actions, or to commit actual sins, they are subject to a thousand miseries; which shews them to be a race of beings out of favour with their maker, and under his displeasure even from their birth: For can we think a God of perfect goodness, wisdom and equity, would bring such infant-beings into existence, to feel such calamities in the complete innocence of spotless nature?



What anguish and pain are infants sometimes exposed to, even as they are coming into the world, and as soon as they are entered into it? What agonies await their birth? What numerous and acute maladies, what deplorable diseases are ready to attack them? What gripes, what convulsions of nature, what cutting anguish, what pangs and inward torments, which bring some of them down to death, as soon as they have seen the light of this world a few hours or days? And if they survive the first three or four months of danger, what unknown torture do they find in the breeding of their teeth, and other maladies of infancy, which can be told only by shrieks and tears, and that for whole days and nights together, while they are lingering on the very borders of death? What additional pains and sorrows do they sustain sometimes by the negligence or poverty of their mothers, and by the cruelty of nurses? What sore bruises and unhappy injuries, whereby many of them are brought down to the grave, either on a sudden, or by slow and painful degrees?

Do we not shudder with a sort of sympathy and compassion, when we read of children falling into the fire, and lying there in helpless screams till their limbs are burned off, or their lives expire in the flames? Or when they drop into scalding vessels of some boiling liquid, whereby they resign their souls in extreme anguish? Are not all our tenderest powers shocked and pained when we hear of infants left on their couches, or in their cradles, by poor parents for a hour or two, while dogs or hogs have gnawed off their flesh from their bones, and they have been found in dying agonies and blood? And what shall we say of whole nations in older times, or the *bottentots* in our age, who expose their children in the woods when they cannot or will not maintain them, to be torn and devoured by any savage beast that passes by? Are these little young creatures counted perfectly innocent and guiltless in the eyes of that God, who by his providence leaves them to be exposed to so dismal a fate?

Add to all this the common calamities in which these infants are involved, when fires, or earthquakes, or pestilences rage through a whole town or city, and multitudes of them being helpless perish with extreme pain. And there are a thousand other accidents that attend these little creatures, whereby their members or their natural powers receive dismal injuries, and perhaps they drag on life with blindness, deafness, lameness or distortion of body or limbs; sometimes they languish on to manhood, and sometimes old age, under miseries and sore calamities, which began almost as soon as their being, and which are only ended by death.

Now as these sorrows and death cannot be sent upon them, in a way of correction for their personal and actual sins, for they have none, so neither are they sent for the trial of their virtue, or as any part of a moral state of probation; for they have no reason in exercise, no knowledge of good and evil, and are incapable of virtue, as well as vice, or any moral probation in their early infancy and state of ignorance; yet we see multitudes of these little miserable beings; and are they treated as the innocent harmless creatures of a God of love and compassion? Amidst all these surrounding scenes of danger and distress, do they look like young favourites of heaven? Or rather, do they not seem to be a little sort of criminals under some general curse and punishment?

If mankind had stood in their original innocence, surely their infant off-spring would have entered into the world under some general word of blessing. The God who

who made the first parents of mankind must certainly have blessed them, in several other respects, as well as in saying, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth:" *Gen. 1. 28.* And their infants would have been born like little young angels, ever easy and smiling in a perfection of innocence, and in circumstances of pleasure: And they would have grown up by many little efforts of goodness, to the fuller knowledge and love of their maker, and the practice of every virtue, surrounded with the comforts and satisfactions of an infant state, and guarded from every mischief by a kind and watchful providence.

But alas, the case of children is quite the reverse of this purity and peace. Survey the dangers and miseries just mentioned, and say, are these provided to receive young angels just entering into being? Were these maladies and griefs and groans prepared to seize a race of little angels coming into our world? If seraphs and cherubs had been made to propagate in our manner, would the great and good God have provided such scenes of pain and peril, disease and death, to have met their young blooming off-spring at the very gates of life, and to have attended them all their way, or would he have sent them so soon, and in such vast multitudes, to death and darkness? Would God have ever appointed a race of infant angels to have entered into being in the midst of such infelicities, and have sent more than half of them to destruction again, before they arrived at the exercise of their intellectual powers, or had seen or done, or enjoyed any thing worth living for? Yet this is the wretched case of the off-spring of mankind in every generation.

It has been objected here, that these sufferings of children may be for the correction and punishment of the sins of their parents. But the answer is evident, viz.

Answer. Can a God of equity and justice inflict such sufferings on children without any such constitution whereby the sins of parents may be, as it were, translated, or imputed to the children, as I have shewn in the following parts of this book?

Besides, many of the parents of these suffering children may be dead, or absent, so as never to know it: How can it then be a correction or punishment for their parents sin, any other ways, than as it is a general punishment for the sin of their first parent?

I know some have pretended to account for all these calamities of the infant-race of mankind, by saying roundly, that God rewards them sufficiently in another world for a few years pain here, when he takes them to heaven. But I answer,

Answer. Are all children which die secured of heaven, either by reason or scripture? If the infant seed of *Abraham* and his pious followers, are taken to dwell with God, as their God, are the children of wicked parents as happy too? Are you sure they are not subject to any pains hereafter? Or that their souls are not annihilated at death? And upon either of these suppositions there is no recompence for the pains they suffer.

Besides, a multitude of these grow up to mature years, and if they should prove wicked at last, and be sent to hell, what recompence have they for their infant-sufferings? Or will you say, that God actually punished them before they had sinned, and while they were innocent, because he knew before-hand they would sin? Is this God's way of dealing with his creatures? Doth reason, or doth scripture give us any hint of this kind? And yet further, how can any creature know what they are punished for? And what wise or good design can this their punishment



nishment obtain, when no creature can know what they are punished for in their infancy, if it be not for some universal degeneracy of all the race?

But because I would answer all the objections I can think of which have the appearance of reason, I would proceed in this work.

Against all these representations of human infelicity and misery, in older or younger years, perhaps, some persons may make this remonstrance: Is not the great God infinite in goodness? Do not his tender mercies spread over all his works? Does not that *Moses*, the *jewish* lawgiver, who has been cited and called to attest the miseries of man, does he not represent God as merciful and gracious, abundant in goodness? *Exod.* xxxiv. 6. How is this consistent with such miseries reigning among his creatures? I answer,

Answer. If we consider mankind as a sinful degenerate part of God's creation, it is most abundant goodness that they have any comforts left, and that their miseries are not doubled: Now *Moses* and the *jewish* writers do consider mankind as fallen from God, and so his goodness is evident in a thousand instances; though it must be confessed there are also thousands of instances of his just hatred of sin, and his righteous punishments scattered all round this world among all nations and all ages of men.

Some have been so weak as to reckon up a large catalogue of the instances of divine bounty and goodness in this lower world, and add thereto the revelation and proposal of his saving grace; and they would make this as evident a proof that mankind stands in the favour of God, as all the other instances of the miseries of human life can be any proof of an universal degeneracy of men, and the anger of God against them. But it is very easy to reply,

Reply. That the goodness of God may incline him to bestow a thousand bounties and graces upon criminals and their whole race; but I think his justice and goodness will not suffer him to inflict miseries in such an universal manner, where there has been no sin to deserve them, either in parents or children, in head or members, in themselves or their representative, as will appear in what follows hereafter; but I would not anticipate my design, and bring in this before it's time.

Consideration XI. If we collect and put together all these scenes of iniquity, folly, and wretchedness, even among the better sort of men, as well as the worst, and that even in younger years, as well as in more advanced age, and take a survey of them in their total sum, it is sufficiently evident that creatures lying in such sinful and miserable circumstances, disobedient to God and under his displeasure, are not such as they came out of the hands of their creator, who is wise and righteous, holy and good. His wisdom, which is all harmony and order, would never suffer him to frame such a vast multitude, such a whole species of beings under such wild and innumerable disorders both natural and moral: His holiness would never permit him to create beings with such innate and powerful principles of iniquity; nor would his infinite goodness allow him to produce a whole rank and order of creatures in such circumstances of pain, agony, torment and death, if they were to be esteemed his pure, innocent and holy workmanship, just come out of his sacred hands.

Can we ever reasonably suppose, that the holy and blessed God would originally design and frame a whole world of intelligent and rational creatures in such circumstances, as that every one of them coming into being, according to the laws of nature,

ture, in long successive ages, in different climates, of different tempers and constitutions, under different influences, having greater or lesser advantages for wisdom, virtue, and happiness; and in ten thousand thousand different stations and conditions of life: I say, can we suppose that they should all break the laws of their reason, and defile themselves with sin in greater or less degrees, should all feel their appetites and passions so often contrary to reason, and yet prevailing over it, that they should all so far offend against their maker, all become guilty in his sight, and be all exposed more or less to his displeasure, to pain and misery, and mortality, without one single instance or exception that we know of to the contrary? If mankind were such creatures as God at first made them, can we suppose that not one man among so many millions, should make so right and proper an use of his reason and conscience as to avoid sin and death? Can we think, that this should be the universal consequent of their original state and constitution, as they are framed by the hand of a wise, and holy, and merciful God? This, I say, is such an absurd thing, as no reasonable man can suppose. Surely God made man upright and happy, and all these mischiefs could never come directly from our creator's hand. Perhaps, here it may be objected again,

Objection. That this universal condemnation of mankind, as it were, by wholesale, and laying them all under such a charge of guilt and wretchedness without exception, is more than our experience or observation will allow. It is acknowledged that many are now guilty, and many are miserable, though they were born innocent, and not degenerate: but still a far greater part of men have more moral good than evil in them, and have more pleasure than they have pain; and therefore upon the whole, mankind must not be pronounced "a sinful and a miserable being:" And if God has appointed such a constitution as is best in the whole view of things, and is favourable to the majority of the human race, or the bulk of the world; this is sufficient to vindicate the justice of God; and then the few sufferers have no reason to complain. Do we not find it thus under the best of human laws and constitutions, that some persons who were once innocent will grow wicked? And that even some innocent persons may be laid under unavoidable hardships or sufferings? Yet all law-givers account those to be just constitutions, which provide for the welfare of the bulk of the subjects, though here and there will be an unhappy instance of guilt and misery.

To this objection I would offer these three answers.

Answer I. In order to pronounce a man miserable, it is granted he must have more pain than pleasure; but in order to pronounce a man a sinner, there is no necessity that his moral evil should exceed his good, or his vices transcend his virtues. If a man had a hundred virtues, one vice in the sight of God would pronounce him a criminal; one evil action would break the law of his maker, and lay him under his maker's just displeasure. He that keeps almost all the law of God, and offends in one point, affronts that authority which requires all obedience: So that all the race of man are certainly under this condemnation, that they are sinners every one of them; and, consequently, exposed to the anger of him that made them. And thus with regard to their sinfulness my argument stands in full force.

As



As for misery, let it be allowed for the present, though it is by no means granted, that there are many persons whose pleasures exceed their uneasinesses; yet it is certain that there are great numbers also of mankind, whose pains or uneasinesses, wisely and justly compared with their pleasures, will appear far to exceed them; and it is hard to say, how this should come to pass, if mankind were all innocent and happy by nature, as they are now born into the world. Their universal sinfulness therefore, and the misery of multitudes, must conclude them all under some spreading degeneracy.

Answer II. What though the makers of human laws are not able to frame such constitutions in every case, which shall certainly secure happiness to all the innocent? This is because their narrow views of things, and their short foresight of future events, will not enable them in making laws to provide against all future inconveniencies, nor to secure the innocent always from injury: But we must not think nor speak thus of the divine law-giver, the creator and the governor of all things: He grasps at once all possibles, as well as all futures, in his present view, and therefore he can guard against any injury that might befall innocent beings; nor will divine justice, in my opinion, suffer any mischief to light upon any individual innocent without equal recompence, for "the judge of all the earth will do right." *Gen. xviii. 25.*

Answer III. Though the bulk of mankind in the present constitution of things could be proved to be happy, by their pleasures exceeding their pains, yet this gives no manner of satisfaction to any one individual, who suffers misery under the same constitution without any demerit. Every intelligent and innocent individual has the same right to his maker's regard in point of justice, as if there were no other creature but he: And the advantage or happiness of the majority is no reason at all, why any one innocent individual should suffer any injury or injustice by the constitution which God has made.

And therefore if God had constituted any thing in his creation or providence, which would bring the least injury, or unjust pain or loss on any individual, sensible, or intelligent being entirely innocent, I think his justice would oblige him to interpose, and to prevent that injury, or to compensate it with some superior good. If any one therefore, whether man or child, among the race of mortals, and especially if a considerable number of them, have more pain than pleasure, they must be supposed to be involved in some guilt, or some fatal degeneracy, which may give just occasion to their misery.

Consideration XII. To give a little further force to this argument, after the survey of all these pains, sorrows, and miseries, let us consider what poor, low, sorry pleasures the bulk of mankind are in pursuit of, to relieve them under this train of wretchedness, and then ask, whether these are suited to a race of intelligent and innocent creatures? Let us stoop down a moment and cast a glance at the sports of children, from five to fifteen years of age; what have all these little toys and fooleries in them, that would be fit for young angels dressed in flesh and blood? Would so many years of early life have been wasted in such mean and trifling diversions by a race of holy and rational beings? And how much early iniquity and mischief in thought, word, and action, is mingled with these sportings among the younger tribes of mankind, God only knows.

As

As for the manly years of life, what are the greatest parts of the delights of men, but either foolish and irrational satisfactions, or down-right sinful? What are the pleasures of the rich and the great, to relieve them under the common sorrows of life? If it be not profuse luxury and intemperance, which is often the case, yet is it not grandeur and magnificence, furniture and equipage, finery of dress and gay appearances, whereby they take a pride to shew themselves superior to the rest of their species? And when they shine in silks of various dye, and blaze amidst the splendor of gold and jewels, this is the vain satisfaction of most of them, to look down upon their fellow-creatures with airs of vanity and contempt, and build up a swelling idea of themselves, as though their outward clothing and appearance added real excellency to their character. Would innocent and rational creatures have made this a matter of their boast and pleasure, "my coat is gayer than your's, and I have more shining things round about me than you have?"

Others, again, in the midst of the common calamities of life, divert themselves with gaming and with childish sports. Whether cards and dice be the utensils of their childish play, to divert their troubles and pass away time, or whether these implements be the engines of covetousness, to deprive their neighbour of what he possesses; yet under both these aspects they are but a sorry relief for a race of holy and innocent beings, should they fall under some unhappy accidents. How trifling are these sports where mere delight and diversion are sought? But if the design be lucre, how is the game mingled with covetous hopes and wishes, with uneasy fears, with the working of wretched inward passions, which sometimes break out into wrath and fury, and vexations under losses and disappointments?

Again, what multitudes are there that drench themselves in gross sensualities as their chief delight? They make a god of their belly, they indulge their appetite in every nicer dish, till they have over-loaded nature, and make haste to disease and death. They drink and swill till they have lost their reason, and lay themselves lower than the brutes that perish. They drown their cares in wine or in coarser liquors, or they bury them in all manner of sensual impurities. Are these the delights that would have been chosen and sought by mankind, had they continued a race of holy and innocent beings, as their God at first made them?

Others there are that release themselves from the toils and sorrows of life, by gadding abroad and mixing with trifling and impertinent company. Some delight in low and wanton jests, and their satisfaction lies in foolish merriment, in mean and trifling conversation, a little above the chattering of monkeys in a wood, or the chirping of crickets upon a hearth, but not always so innocent.

And there is another set of the sons and daughters of *Adam*, who are never so well satisfied as when they are railing at their neighbours, and tossing scandal abroad; they take every one's character to pieces, and set it in a hateful light. From principles of mingled pride and envy they are hurried on with pleasure to murder the reputation of their fellows. They cast abroad firebrands and arrows tipped with slander and poison; and say, am I not in sport? They delight to tear their neighbour's good name without mercy. This is their mirth and recreation, this their satisfaction and joy; these are their reliefs against the common miseries of human nature, and their chosen methods to pass away the tiresome hours of life.

But would a race of innocent beings, if they ever happened to meet with any accident of pain or sorrow, fly to such sort of mean and foolish, or criminal, refuges as these are? Would they pursue such gluttonous and drunken pleasures, such vain or vile delights? Would they become rivals for happiness with the four-footed



beasts of the earth, and aim at no higher felicities? Or would they sport themselves as devils do, in accusing their fellow-creatures? Surely, if we take a due survey of the very pleasures of the bulk of mankind, as well as of their sorrows, we may learn from thence, that we are by no means such creatures as our primitive creation made us, but there is some great and universal degeneracy spread over all the generations of men.

Consideration XIII. If I were to add one more proof of the general ruin and degenerate state of human nature, I would observe, how we are all passing to death and the grave, and every one of us are succeeding our neighbours, in our proper turns into some unknown state, some invisible and future world, and we profess to believe this too; and yet how exceeding few are there amongst mankind who are solicitous about this great and awful futurity? Though we are exposed to so many miseries, sins and follies in the present life, and are hastening visibly and hourly to the end of it, yet how few are there that make any careful preparation for a better state than this, or that seek to acquire a temper fit for the superior pleasures of a world of spirits, even though they believe this better world? What multitudes are running down daily and directly to death and darkness, and speeding to an endless duration in some unknown country, without any earnest enquiries and solitudes of soul about their manner of existence there, and their final fate and doom when this life is at an end? They walk over the busy stage of life, their souls are filled with the concerns of mortality, they toil and labour, or they play and trifle a while here, so far as the burdens and calamities of life will permit them, and then they plunge with reluctance into an unseen and strange world, where they will meet with a just and holy God, whose wisdom will assign them a place and portion suited to their own character: But we have reason to fear by their sinful behaviour among men, that that portion and that place, to which the bulk of mankind are hastening, is far distant from the favour of the God that made them, and from other holy and happy creatures whom he has framed for the inhabitants of those regions. Thus far our fears of their future misery are but too justly awakened.

Now is it possible, if we were a race of pure and innocent beings made for immortality, in some other world, that God should suffer the bulk of mankind to remain so ignorant and thoughtless of that future state into which we are all hastening? Would a good and gracious God leave a race of such creatures as he made them, in such a stupid insensibility of their eternal interests, so unsuited to the felicities of an immortal spirit, and so negligent of all preparations for them?

Should some blessed angel of heaven, who had never known any thing of our earth, come down amongst us, or some inhabitant of an innocent globe, some stranger to our world, descend from one of God's holy dominions on high, and spend a month or two in a survey of all the iniquities and miseries of the tribes of mankind, can we imagine he would pronounce us holy or happy? Could he ever believe the holy and wise, the righteous and the gracious God ever put such workmanship as we are out of his hands for new-made creatures? Would he not immediately conclude, there are so many signs of guilt and wretchedness among us, as constrain him to confess some universal degeneracy and desolation fallen upon us, which is utterly unknown to the holy and happy provinces of the empire of the blessed God?

Upon this whole survey, I think our own reason must needs join in the same mournful confession, that some universal apostasy from the laws of our creation, some criminal disorder and wretchedness has some way or other come upon the whole race of mankind, since they first came out of the hands of their maker: There must be some spreading poison which has tainted our nature, which renders us so prone to sin, and so lamentably guilty, so miserable in the present state, so thoughtless of the future, and so unprepared for it. There must be some general revolt of the race of man from their creator, whereby they have disturbed, disordered, and broken their original natures and powers, whereby they have ruined their innocence and their peace, and raised a most unhappy empire of tyrannical and vexing passions upon the ruin of them; whereby they have provoked the anger of their kind, wise and holy maker, and their righteous governor, and whereby they become exposed to such wretched circumstances even in their infancy and childhood, as well as when they grow to years of greater understanding: I think it is evident that a righteous and wise governor, even though we should not consider his infinite goodness, would not suffer creatures to come into such deplorable circumstances, if they were not regarded by him in some sort as criminals: He would not inflict so much natural evil, that is, pain and misery, and spread it through such a vast province of his dominion, so universally without exception, nor suffer it to be inflicted in the course of his providence, if it were not with a regard to some general moral evil, that is, sin.

Will some persons again complain, that in representing the sorrows and miseries of mankind, I have here acted the part of a satyrists rather than of a philosopher, and have summed together all the pains, mischiefs and distresses of human life without giving a due place to the pleasures and delights of it, or bringing them into the account?

I confess that the great God hath furnished this world, which is the habitation of man, with multitudes of grateful and pleasing objects, to regale his senses, to feast his appetites, and to excite his most agreeable passions, which might have been part of his happiness in a state of innocence. But now the unreasonable strength and violent efforts of these appetites, the sinful bent and bias of his will, together with the weak resistance against vicious excesses which is made by his reason and conscience, turn every one of these pleasures into real dangers and snares. There are but few who indulge these delights without dishonouring their nature, defiling their souls with sin, and breaking the laws of God; and in the midst of so degenerate a state, their most tempting satisfactions and delights do in a great measure lose the nature of good or benefit, because of their constant danger of plunging men into guilt and misery.

Shall I be told again, that there are multitudes of men, whose easy and peaceful circumstances are much superior to their troubles and sorrows, and these would upon the whole be pronounced happy, even if there were no future state?

Though I have answered this already, by shewing that the happiness of the major part does not vindicate that constitution which leaves any individuals under misery without some original demerit, yet I will answer here more directly,

Answer. That if the greatest part of men could see things in their true light, as God and angels regard them, surely the bulk of the world would be found on the miserable side, whatever particular exceptions might be found among individuals: And this in general would teach us that the inhabitants of this world are



not a race of happy beings, such as they would have been, if they had been innocent, or such as they were when they came first out of the hands of their maker?

But the inference of our wretchedness or ruin, may be pronounced with much more strength and universality concerning this world, if we join the sins and the miseries of mankind together. If we unite in one view all the criminal as well as the painful circumstances which I have represented in these foregoing propositions, I think it must be granted, that there is some universal ruin and degeneracy spread all over human nature, and every individual helps to complete this mournful sentence, and confirm the truth of it, that "man is a sinful and unhappy being."

And methinks, when I take my justest survey of this lower world, with all the inhabitants of it, I can look upon it no otherwise than as a huge and magnificent structure in ruins, and turned into a prison and a lazaret-house or hospital, wherein lie millions of criminals and rebels against their creator, under condemnation to misery and death; who are at the same time sick of a mortal distemper, and disordered in their minds, even to distraction: Hence proceed those infinite follies and vices which are continually practised here, and the righteous anger of an offended God is visible in ten thousand instances. Yet there are proclamations of divine grace, health, and life, sounding amongst them, either with a louder voice or in gentler whispers, though very few of them take any notice thereof. But out of this great prison, this infirmary, there is, here and there, one who is called powerfully by divine grace, and attends to the offers of reconciliation, and complies with the proposals of peace: His sins are pardoned, he is healed of his worst distemper; and though his body is appointed to go down to the dust for a season, yet his soul is taken upwards to a region of blessedness, while the bulk of these miserable and guilty inhabitants perish in their own wilful madness, and by the just executions of divine anger. Before I finish this general head I would ask leave to make one remark, and that is,

Remark. What an unreasonable thing is it to deny this doctrine of the universal depravity and corruption of mankind, and renounce it in every degree, when it appears so evident to our eyes, and to our ears, and to our daily and constant observation and experience in so many thousand instances? Is it not almost like winking against the light, since the promises are so strong and glaring, and the inference so powerfully demands our assent?

I must profess, that with all the diligence and impartiality with which I am capable of reviewing what I have written on this universal degeneracy of mankind, I am not conscious that I have made a false representation of this matter, or aggravated it beyond truth. The innumerable miseries, follies and madness of mankind, which in various forms strike our eyes, our ears, and our thoughts from day to day, confirm my sentiments of the doctrine of some original and universal fall of man from the purity and glory of his creation.

And what is the chief temptation that leads some men to deny this doctrine? Is it not because they cannot give a satisfactory account how to solve some of the difficulties that attend it? Many of the heathen philosophers believed it from their own experience, and their daily survey of mankind, though they were utterly at a loss how to account for it: And what if we could never assign any sufficient and satisfactory reason and cause for it, or shew how this spreading degeneracy begun, or how it came to take place so universally amongst men? What if we are perplexed

plexed and still at a loss to satisfy our own enquiries, how all this guilt and mischief came upon us; must we therefore deny what we see, and hear, and feel daily?

Can we account for all the secret things in the creation of God, in the world of meteors and minerals, the vegetables of the field, or the brutes of the earth, or the animal body of man? Does any man refuse to believe that the infinite variety of plants and flowers in all their beautiful colours and forms grow up out of the same dark and dirty soil, because he doth not know all the secret springs of their vegetation? Do men doubt of the truth of a loadstone's drawing iron to itself, and making a needle point to the north, because they cannot find out the way of it's operation? Are we not sure that our food nourishes our bodies, and medicines relieve our pains, though we are utterly at a loss to tell all the ferments and motions of those atoms by which our nourishment is performed, or our diseases healed? Can we account for all the darkneses, and appearing difficulties and confusions among the events of providence? Can we discover all the reasons of the wise conduct of God among his creatures? No surely, we cannot pretend to it: And yet since these matters of fact, and these events are obvious to all our senses, do we not deny and refuse to believe these things which are evident in creation and providence, and which are communicated to us by so many springs and mediums of knowledge, merely because we cannot account for the original and secret causes or reasons of them? Or because we cannot reconcile some crossing appearances, and jarring apprehensions that attend them? Why then should this universal degeneracy and ruin of human nature be denied, though we cannot remove every objection that attends it?

And yet if we will search faithfully into the causes and springs of this matter, so far as our natural reason, assisted by the light of revelation, will enable us, we may hope to find some solution of those hard questions, which may give a degree of satisfaction to humble and modest minds, though perhaps not sufficient to silence every curious and unreasonable cavil.

## Q U E S T I O N II.

*How came this general degeneracy, vice, and misery, to overspread mankind in all nations and in all ages?*

**T**O find a complete and satisfactory answer to this enquiry is not a very easy thing. It was a vexing question among the ancient schools of the heathen philosophers, "whence evil came first among mankind?" And though they had many guesses and loose conjectures, yet none of them could give an account of this matter, to satisfy the minds of studious men. And if we should not hit upon such a solution of this difficulty now, as may on every side make all things lie quite strait and easy, yet if we can but propose a way to solve it, which may maintain the honour of God, and justify his conduct in a good degree, we may expect the reader should be candid in his censures, where the matter of fact is so evident, and yet the manner of accounting for it is so difficult,



ficult that it has employed the wisdom of great and learned men in all ages with so doubtful a success.

To find an answer to this question, we shall not immediately run into revelation and scripture; though doubtless, we have the most certain and satisfactory account of it given us there; yet since what the scripture says of this matter is so short, and is to be derived chiefly from the third chapter of the book of *Genesis*, and the fifth chapter to the *Romans*, and from some few other general hints that are scattered up and down in the bible, let us try whether we cannot by a train of reasonings, with a little help from scripture, find out some clew that will lead us into the spring and original of this sinful and miserable state; and afterward we will inquire whether or no this very clew of reasoning, this track of guilt and misery, be not the same which scripture more directly points out to us, and strongly confirms by all it's sacred and divine discoveries on this subject.

In order to trace out this matter by reasoning, let us begin according to the following propositions.

Proposition I. This general degeneracy of mankind, so far as I can judge, can come upon them but by one of these three ways; either, 1. That the souls of all men existed in a former state, and sinned against their maker there, and are sent to dwell in bodies in this world, attended with such unhappy circumstances of sin and misery, either as a natural consequent of, or as a punishment for their former sins in some other world. Or, 2. That one original parent of them all sinned against his maker, and sustained the miseries consequent upon it in his own person first, and when he became a father, he spread a sinful and miserable nature through all his race and off-spring by mere propagation. Or, 3. Some original person stood before God, as a common federal head and representative of mankind, upon condition of bringing happiness or misery on all the race according as he behaved, well or ill; and through his disobedience, sin and misery came upon all whose head he was, or whom he represented. If the two first will not solve the difficulty, we shall be constrained to take in the last. Let us see how far each will go.

Proposition II. This present wretched state of things, could not arise from the particular personal sin of all single souls in a former state before they came into this world: This present universal misery and wretchedness, could never be appointed as a punishment to us for our former personal offences against our maker, for we know nothing of any such former state or former offences; we have not the least idea or remembrance of it: Now personal guilt cannot be properly punished by the all-knowing and just God, where the sinner has no consciousness nor remembrance of the crime. There must be the same mind, the same spirit, the same intelligent self or person, conscious both of the past personal sin, and of the present punishment, to make it appear to be a proper instance of the anger of God for their sin; otherwise the ends of personal punishment cannot be answered, sinning creatures will not be made to see the justice of their punisher, nor can they condemn themselves as justly deserving such misery. Without this consciousness and remembrance, all our miseries would be nothing but afflictive evils brought on us by our creator, not as personal criminals, but as mere creatures, and consequently not agreeable to the goodness and equity of a God.

Proposition III.

Proposition III. If this sinful and miserable condition of men cannot be supposed to arise from their own personal sins in a pre-existent state, we may enquire then in the next place, whether it may not be derived from some original parent of our race, who sinning against God, lost his own innocence, and therewith lost his habit or principles of virtue and goodness; he was exposed to the displeasure of his maker, and fell under just and grievous miseries.

Such a primitive sinner, if he proceeded to propagate his off-spring according to the common rules or laws of nature, must communicate to them such a sinful nature as he had himself, and they will stand exposed to the natural effects of his sin, as well as to all following penal miseries for their own sins. The same irregular ferments of flesh and blood, and such corrupt appetites and vicious passions, will be found in them also; which still grew stronger before the young creatures grew up, so far as to exercise their reason. And when by degrees they came to know good and evil, and to be capable of actual sin, these vicious propensities did generally, if not always, overcome their rational faculties, did prevail upon their wills to a frequent actual compliance, and led them away effectually to sin against their maker, and so to expose themselves more and more to his displeasure, and to confirm their own habits of sin.

And thus every one of the race of man, in their successive seasons of life, might become personally vicious, or deprived of the holy image of God, by their descending from vicious parents, and were deprived of the favour of God by their own actual compliances with these vicious propensities of nature, that is, by actual iniquities. I think it may be granted, that this supposition will solve the difficulty in some measure, and will go a great way toward an answer to the present enquiry.

Proposition IV. But still this in my opinion seems hardly sufficient to account for the miseries which come upon children from their very birth, for the pains and agonies, and dying groans, and death itself in their infant-state, before they are capable of knowing or doing good and evil, or of committing actual sins: And the reason I give for my opinion is this; these tendencies or propensities towards evil in the infant-state, even though the soul or will complies with them, while there is no possible knowledge of a law or duty, can hardly be called actual sins: Nor can children, while incapable of proper virtue or vice, merit such pains and agonies of themselves as they often suffer. And I can scarce suppose they would be thus punished or tormented by a righteous or wise governor in their infant-age, when they cannot possibly commit actual sin, nor have any knowledge of good or evil, merely upon the account of the necessary propagation of a sinful nature to them from their parents, since they come into this state by that original law of creation and propagation, which a kind and wise creator appointed to his innocent creatures. I cannot account for their being treated as sinners, unless they were some way involved in guilt or sin, as soon as they are born: And I do not see how this can be, unless they have \* sin some way imputed to them by their interest in, and

\* By "sin or guilt imputed," I do not mean that any thing or action really faulty, is charged by way of accusation on the persons of infants, as though they hereby become personally faulty or blamable, or that the very acts of sin are transferred so as to make them proper sinners or criminals: but



and communion with some common federal head, surety or representative, who hath actually sinned.

Proposition V. I might add also, that this natural propagation of sinful inclinations from a common parent by a law of creation, seems difficult to be reconciled with the justice and goodness of God, unless we suppose that some such legal or federal guilt and condemnation came upon the race of man by the misbehaviour of a common surety or head. It seems exceeding hard to suppose that such a righteous and holy God the creator, who is also a being of such infinite goodness, should by a powerful law and order of creation, which is now called nature, appoint young intelligent creatures to come into being in such unhappy and degenerate circumstances, liable to such intense pains and miseries, and under such powerful tendencies and propensities to evil by the mere law of propagation, as should almost unavoidably expose them to ten thousand actual sins as they grow up, if they were not born under some judicial sentence of God as a governor on the account of moral evil or sin; which moral evil must be before committed, either by themselves or by some representative.

It is hard to suppose, that the creating power and decree of God, or his law of nature for propagation, should place mankind in such a situation as to render them unavoidably sinful and miserable in a degree, before they have any personal sin or guilt to deserve it, unless you suppose them to be some way interested or involved in something of guilt or sin, which was derived from a common head, surety or representative, who might be appointed by some wise and righteous constitution to act for them.

Proposition VI. Upon the whole view of things therefore, I know not how to resolve this difficulty, but by supposing this universal sinfulness and misery of our whole species, to arise from the sin and guilt of some person, who was both a primitive parent or natural fountain of our race, and who was also set up as a common head or legal representative of all mankind: And that he by sinning against his maker, lost his own principles of virtue and goodness, exposed himself and his posterity, whom he naturally produced, and whom he legally represented, to the displeasure of his maker, and so brought sin and misery into the very nature of man, and spread or conveyed this sin or misery through all his off-spring.

I must but I mean that the children of some first man may be by a righteous covenant, so far esteemed one with their parent when he sinned, as to be in some sense, involved with him in his state of condemnation, and liable to the miseries that proceed from it. This I have made to appear at large in the plainest light, in a short appendix or dissertation on "imputed sin and righteousness;" and I desire all my expressions in this book may be construed in a consistency with this remark, and with that dissertation at the end of the book.

The arguments therefore which are brought against this doctrine, from the impossibility or the injustice of imputing the very actions of one man to another, have no force, since I have so often declared in that essay, that actions are not properly transferred by imputation, but the legal result of those actions.

|| If it could be well made out, that the whole race of mankind are partakers of sinful inclinations and evil passions and biases to vice, and also are exposed to many sharp actual sufferings, and to death, merely and only by the original divine law of their propagation from their parents who had sinned; and if the justice and goodness of God could be vindicated in making and maintaining such a dreadful law or order of propagation through six thousand years; we have no need of further enquiries, but might here be at rest. But if such a scheme be so injurious to the goodness and equity of God, as it seems to be, then we are constrained to seek a little further for a satisfactory of this universal degeneracy and misery of mankind.

I must confess I am not fond of such a scheme or hypothesis, of deriving some sort of guilt from a surety or representative, though I know it has been embraced by a considerable party of christians ancient and modern. No; I would gladly renounce it, because of some great difficulties attending it, if I could find any other way to relieve the much greater difficulties and harder imputations upon the conduct of divine providence, which will attend this enquiry, if we follow any other track of sentiments. Nor do I see any way how to avoid or escape these perplexities, if we abandon this supposition of a common head or representative of mankind, who may be supposed according to a just constitution to involve his posterity together with himself in a state of guilt and misery.

Is it not much easier, to suppose that God looks upon these young creatures not as innocent or guiltless, but as some way involved or interested in sin or guilt, when in the very original course of nature which he appointed, he brings them into being in such miserable circumstances, and so exposed to sin as well as pain? I say, is it not much easier to suppose, that they are looked on as some way under guilt and condemnation, than that the appointment and providence of a good and holy God should bring them hourly into being, in the midst of such sinful and miserable circumstances, and punish them with such early pains and sorrows, while he looks upon them as perfectly innocent and guiltless?

The fact is evident. The great God, who is both just and good, has appointed and continues such a law of propagation, whereby millions of infants without any personal sin or fault of their own are brought into being under these wretched circumstances, inclined to sin, and liable to a thousand sorrows and pains, and death. This is plain and certain fact, beyond all reasonable doubt or contest: Now will not the equity or justice, and the goodness of God be much better vindicated by supposing some original and righteous constitution\*, whereby these young creatures are some way involved in the guilt or sin of their original parent and representative, and so made liable to misery, than by supposing them to be entirely innocent without any charge of imputed sin, and yet brought into being daily by the God of nature, in a condition of such proneness to sin, and exposed to such miseries?

And as the glorious and holy nature and actions of God are best vindicated by such a supposition, so without it I cannot well explain the scriptural account of this matter in that one short sentence, *Rom. v. 12.* "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;" that is, sin is imputed, or, which is much one in *St. Paul's* language, "death, the penalty of sin, has passed on all, or has reigned over all," and therefore all are esteemed in some sort as guilty and condemned in the sight of God, though they did not sin after the similitude of *Adam's* transgression, that is, they did not commit actual personal sin against a known law as *Adam* did §. But I give but a single hint in this place, because I have reserved the scriptural account for another part of the discourse.

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\* The righteousness of this constitution appears plain in propositions V and VI. under question III. and section II. in question IV.

§ I confess that it is from scripture I derive my sentiments on this subject, and I firmly believe this doctrine



## Q U E S T I O N III.

*How could a holy, a wise, and a righteous God, who is also a being of infinite goodness, establish such a constitution, that all mankind should derive their being from such a natural parent and legal representative, whereby such universal sinfulness and misery should in the event, be spread through all human nature in all following ages?*

Answer. **I**F this constitution was not only in itself a wise and a righteous thing in the universal creator and governor of the world, but if it was also the effect of goodness in God, as an universal Father of his intelligent creatures, then surely we shall silence all our censures of it at once. If it was a more probable way, so far as we can see, to secure the continuance of man and his whole race in the image and favour of his maker, though it happened to have a contrary event by the negligence and faulty conduct of the first man, yet I say, it was a more proper and probable means to secure man in his happiness, then all must confess that this original constitution doth not impeach the holiness, justice or goodness of God. Now let us enter into particulars, and enquire whether this constitution be not only just and holy, but also good and kind, and most proper and likely to secure innocent man: Perhaps this will appear in the following propositions.

Proposition I. God created man an intelligent and holy creature, but capable of mistake and sin; a compound being made up of flesh and spirit, or an animal and a mind, with power also to propagate his kind in long successive generations. Now that this could not be unjust, will appear by particulars.

1. There is no injustice in God in creating such a being as man, a creature capable of mistaking and capable of sinning. What if man was formed with intellectual powers inferior to those of an angel? Let him remember that even an angel is capable of mistake and sin also: Nor has man any reason to complain that he was not made an angel; for by the same reason an angel might complain that he was not an archangel: And this sort of unreasonable complaint might upon the same foot have run through all lower orders of being, and would have laid a restraint upon God the creator, from making any lower ranks of intelligent creatures whatsoever. According to this way of arguing, God would never have manifested the rich variety of his wisdom in the various ranks and degrees of creatures; for no rank of beings but the uppermost could ever have been formed. Nay, it may be doubted, according to this

doctrine of the imputation of sin from *Adam* to all his off-spring, according to the sense in which it is explained in the second essay at the end of this book; yet I have endeavoured to shew here, that a careful observation of the world, and the exercise of our reasoning powers, with a very little help from revelation, will lead us into these sentiments, and discover to us the justice of them.

In short, as I have said before, these events must arise from such a constitution or covenant, formed and executed by God as the righteous and supreme governor of the world, or from the sovereign and arbitrary appointment of God as a creator and absolute Lord; and I think the execution of this sovereignty brings a harder impeachment of God's conduct than this act of government.

this way of arguing, whether any creature at all could be formed : For perhaps the highest creature considered merely in his own natural powers might be capable of mistake and defect in duty.

But if it be not an unfit or improper thing for an almighty God to make any creature, it is not unfit for him to make a fallible creature, and capable of some defect, though he was originally perfect. And since he is a God of infinite wisdom, he thought it very becoming his character to manifest this infinitely various wisdom in the formation of a vast variety of ranks of beings, some of which should have higher and nobler intellectual powers, and should be further out of the reach of temptation and mistake, and others of them of lower or meaner intellectual powers, and more within the danger of mistake and temptation. Now this carries no injustice with it, provided that every rank of beings has a sufficient power to guard against it's dangers of mistaking, and against the assaults of the temptations to which it might be exposed.

2. Nor was it unjust in God to unite an animal body to this rational mind; for by this union there is a rich variety of new powers arising in that creature, such as sense, appetite, passion, together with all the sensible qualities of colours, sounds, tastes, smells, &c. and the government of animal engines by a mind, all which manifest the various and astonishing riches of divine wisdom in the contriving of such a wondrous creature as man. And if it should be objected,

Objection. That the mind or spirit is exposed to some temptations by reason of this union with animal nature, let it be remembered, that the innocent spirit or rational principle was formed in a state of power and dominion over all the appetites and passions that arise from flesh and blood; and had abundant capacity to resist all these temptations, while reason maintained it's superior post in which it was created, and it did govern sense, appetite and passion.

And besides, if there are some supposed inconveniencies attending a spirit united to an animal body, so there are many certain advantages arising from it in the innocent state. The spirit is hereby made capable of tasting all the pleasures of sense, and of the more boundless power of imagination, and making use of the additional powers or organs of the animal, viz. eyes, ears, tongue, hands, &c. and all the vigorous efforts of the better passions, for the discharge of it's duty, for the honour of it's God, for the benefit of it's fellow-creatures, and for the happiness of itself.

3. There could be no injustice in appointing such a creature to propagate it's own kind by marriage, and to furnish it with all proper powers for that purpose : For if man continued in innocence, he would then enjoy all the innocent pleasures of numerous society, and some of those too springing from himself in every age, together with all the tender and endeared sentiments and delights of sons and daughters, and as *Milton* expresses it,

“ Relations dear, and all the charities  
Of father, son and brother, ”

which would greatly add to the happiness of his earthly state.



**Proposition II.** Though man was created with powers inferior to some other intellectual beings, yet he was formed in the image of his maker, and in his maker's favour; in a state of perfect innocence, holiness and peace, with sufficient knowledge to defend and secure him from fatal mistakes, and with sufficient power to resist temptation and to maintain himself in this holy and happy state: But at the same time he was furnished with a liberty of will, that is, with a power to chuse good or evil, to disobey his maker, as well as obey him, to use his understanding well in governing his sense, appetite and passion, or to abuse his understanding, and darken and weaken it by giving the reins to sensuality and his meaner powers: he had a liberty or free-will to watch against temptation or to be negligent, to resist it or to comply with it, to abide in the favour and image of his maker, or to fall from his maker's image and favour, according as he should use his liberty well or ill.

Now here is no injustice, nor any want of goodness in making man a free creature: For it is by this freedom that he becomes capable of moral government: It is this that renders him a proper subject of rewards, if he maintains his virtue and obeys his maker; and it gives him a power of advancing himself by his obedience in his maker's love: And it is this liberty also that renders him a proper subject of punishment if he neglect his watch, and turn aside to the paths of vice and disobedience.

**Proposition III.** Innocent man had probably some privileges given him by divine favour, above what were necessary and due to the mere state of his creation, viz. he might be indulged to converse with his maker, perhaps in a visible manner, and to receive special and peculiar communications from him: He might be situated in a place of very great pleasure, with all varieties of tasteful food, and other instruments and objects for his refreshment and delight, and with encouragements to hope, and assurances to expect, that if he continued always humbly dependent upon God, and ever watchful against temptation, and attentive to his duty, he should have strong divine aids in case of danger, upon his application to his maker for them. This is a very reasonable supposition, derived from the weakness of man, the fallibility of his nature, and from the abounding goodness of his maker.

**Proposition IV.** Man was not only by the constitution of his nature put under a law of obedience to God his maker, in whatsoever he should require of him, but also he might have that law set before him in some more express manner, together with the penalty or threatening annexed to it, viz. "If thou obeyest not thy God in the duty which reason requires, thou shalt surely lose thy present privileges and life itself." Now this ought to have been a constant and powerful guard to him against all temptations, if he had the command and the threatening so expressly set before him.

**Proposition V.** There is also abundant reason to believe, that he had not only a law given him with a penalty threatened for the breach of it, but also a covenant made with him, and a promise given to him, not only of continuing in his present happiness, but of being immutably confirmed and established

blished in immortality; and, perhaps, of enjoying some greater happiness if he continued to obey God and abstain from sin.

This covenant, indeed, seems to be a matter of pure divine favour, above and beyond what was due to him as a creature: For after he had fulfilled his obedience to the law for many years, and continued in the possession of his present comforts, God considered as an absolute sovereign might have annihilated him, and have done him no wrong, so far as I can judge. The great God is absolute Lord of all, and if we consider only his sovereignty and his justice, he might, I think, have taken away from a creature what he had given him without any injustice at all? So that this covenant of life or promise of immortality, and especially of superior happiness as a reward of his obedience, was the mere effect of divine goodness.

And yet we cannot but suppose there was such a covenant made with innocent man, and such a promise of life, and even of superior happiness given him upon condition of obedience during his state of trial, if we consider the following things.

1. I might in the first place argue thus. The great goodness of God, so far as it has been manifested in his conduct towards his creatures, seems to plead for it, that man should have some reward of his obedience, some additional gratifications and blessings above the mere continuance of his present life and peace: For it hath not been the way of God in any of his dispensations with the children of men, so far as we can learn from observation or scripture, to set his creatures at work for nothing. *1 Cor. ix. 9, 10.* God will have the "ox rewarded that treads out the corn by forbidding to muzzle him," and permitting him to eat; and so he will have his ministers rewarded with a maintenance. *Ezek. xxix. 19, 20.* God bestows all "the riches and the spoil of *Egypt* to reward *Nebuchadnezzar* and his army for the service which they had served against *Tyrus*, for they wrought for me, saith the Lord." It is described as the known character of God, and what every man is called to believe, that, "he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," *Heb. xi. 6.* And it has been his constant course of transaction with his creatures, to encourage them to duty by the promise of some reward above their present state and circumstances: And if it is thus in our fallen state, why should it not be much rather in the state of innocence?

2. I argue thus: God made the soul of man in it's own nature immortal: Now if man had continued innocent, and honoured the law of God with obedience during all his state of trial, man would have acquired some advances in the knowledge of God, some improvement of his nature, and greater resemblance to God, by a more intimate acquaintance and converse with God in his various perfections and works, and some stronger bias to the love of God and to all holiness, which in itself would have been a natural increase of his happiness. Nor is it to be supposed, that the blessed God would have presently contradicted the nature of things, and that connexion of causes and effects which his own wisdom had just established, that is, the connexion of holiness and happiness: Nor can we imagine that he would have forbid the soul of man to be immortal, contrary to it's very nature, in order to have put an end to the life and happiness of so holy and so obedient a creature; God always loves holiness so much, that he will reward it where he finds it.

And



And if man with this improvement of his nature had continued immortal, his happiness had been still greater, and that without end.

3. God hath wrought into the nature of man an earnest desire after life or immortality, and also a desire of a perpetual change or novelty of pleasures, and that without the diminution of them. The nature of man would be tired with one everlasting round of the mere repetition of sensible delights, of eating, drinking, sleeping, working, &c. or even of the more refined delights of the mind, if there were no novelty, no fresh scenes of pleasure to open upon him; and yet man could never desire new pleasures should be less than those he enjoyed before. Now since God hath wrought this appetite or desire of immortality, and of fresh delights into the very nature of man, it is highly probable that God who makes nothing in vain, would have raised or translated him to some scenes of higher felicity, and thus gratified this desire which himself had wrought in his innocent creature, after man had paid him so much actual honour and obedience in his state of trial.

4. I might borrow another argument from scripture and the tree of life, which in the new testament is made a figure of the advanced happiness of heaven, and the joys which the saints shall possess there. Now though it be not expressly revealed at large in so short a history as the third of *Genesis*, that a blessed immortality should be the reward of *Adam's* obedience, yet there is much reason to suppose that the tree of life could not properly have been any emblem or figure of eternal life under the covenant of grace, if it had not been an emblem, sign, seal, or pledge of this covenant of works, and of this promise which should have made *Adam* immortal, and unchangeably happy; and that probably in the same way as the tree of knowledge of good and evil was made a sign and pledge of the evil that should come upon him, if he disobeyed his maker.

Upon the whole therefore, it is highly rational to conclude, that if man had continued innocent, his pleasures would have been increased, and his life immortal.

Proposition VI. This covenant is justly supposed to reach to his posterity, and include his off-spring as well as himself in this manner, viz. if man continued in his state of obedience, and thereby confirmed or advanced himself in the image and favour of his maker, and secured immortal life to himself, by his obedience during the appointed time of his trial, he should also propagate his off-spring perhaps in that established or advanced degree of the divine image and favour, or at least in the security of immortal life and happiness to them: But if man should bring a sinful taint and vicious disorder upon his nature, and diseases and death upon his animal body, by tasting some forbidden pleasure, and sinning against God, that he should not only lose this image and favour of God himself with all his privileges, but that he should beget his off-spring in his own sinful likeness, and in his own unhappy circumstances, despoiled of the image and favour of God, and of the privileges which their father enjoyed during his innocency.

Now there is no injustice in this appointment: Because life as well as death was contained in the covenant; and the advantages which were to be enjoyed by the obedience of the first man, and his posterity, were as great or greater than the disadvantages which should attend his disobedience.

And

And as there was no injustice in it, so it may be proved, that it was an instance of divine goodness to mankind: For when one man was set up as a common head of multitudes, he must be supposed to have so much the stronger obligations upon his mind to obedience, in order to preserve and secure the happiness of those multitudes, which should spring from him as well as his own, and which would be involved in his misery, in case he disobeyed. No single person standing the test of obedience to obtain his own single happiness, can be supposed to have an equal motive to diligence and watchfulness, and duty, with that man who was entrusted both with his own welfare, and with the welfare of millions.

And besides, it was a further instance of divine goodness as well as wisdom, to intrust that very man with the fate of mankind, who was to be the father and fountain of all their race: For all the kind endearing thoughts that arise from the relation of a father, must add abundant weight to the obligations and the sollicitude which lay upon him to continue in his state of innocence and obedience. If he had merely been appointed to be the representative of millions who were no way a-kin to him, it must have lain with much concern upon the heart of a good and innocent man, as the first man was, to oblige him to watchfulness in his duty; but when every one of these millions in his own off-spring, the obligation is enhanced by all the tenderness of a father, and all the sollicitude that an innocent and benevolent father must be supposed to have for the welfare of those who should spring from him.

And it is possible also that all this might be set before the first man in a very strong light by God, his creator; he might be informed that he should have a large posterity, and that they should all stand and be happy, or fall and be miserable, together with himself.

Proposition VII. Man being furnished with all these principles and powers to enable him to stand his ground against temptation, with all these strong and tender obligations to secure his own happiness and the happiness of his off-spring, was put into a state of trial, that he might acquire the rewards promised to obedience, and do honour to the governing justice and authority of God, while he was procuring happiness to himself and his off-spring.

Proposition VIII. Unhappy man, though placed in these advantageous circumstances, yet gave way to the allurements of sense or appetite or passion, by neglecting his watch, he grew unattentive to the command, the promise, and the threatened penalty, he hearkened perhaps to the temptations of some evil spirit, he rashly determined on the side of sense and appetite, he ventured to break his maker's law, lost his innocence and happiness, his maker's image and his favour.

It is no wonder that he lost his maker's favour, for that depended upon the condition of obeying his maker's command: When man had failed of his duty in the day of trial, God, the governor and the judge, does not and will not treat him with the favour which he shewed him in the days of his innocence and obedience. And we may reasonably suppose, that God who made himself and his goodness known to his innocent creature, and conversed with him in a friendly manner, forsook his disobedient creature and departed from him,



him, and gave him none of those kind visits or comforts which perhaps he might enjoy before, nor had he sufficient encouragement to expect divine assistances in case of any future dangers or temptations \*.

Nor is it strange, that man should lose his maker's image by indulging one sin; for his nature itself became vitiated by this one sinful action, which may be accounted for several ways.

1. By acting contrary to the principle or habit of holiness which was in his soul, he violated and weakened this habit or principle of holiness: It was a bold venture for him to allow so much as a debate within himself, whether he should disobey his maker or no: But by actually cheating or contradicting his conscience, and by sinning against the light of his innocent state, and his own mind, and reason, he broke the inward spring of conscience and virtue, if I may so express it, which gave him before a constant bent and propensity to holiness and obedience: As we find at this day, when persons of a religious education once violate the restraints of their own mind, and break the bars of conscience, they render it's force much weaker for time to come, and go on to act contrary to it with still greater ease and freedom.

2. When man had once sinned against his maker, his heart must necessarily misgive him, and his guilty fears continually arise: His reason and conscience must tell him, that he was an offender, a rebel-creature, and that his maker had a right to resent his crime; and how terrible that resentment might be, he knew not. Thenceforward he looked upon God with an eye of fear and dread rather than with an eye of love: He might probably despair of mercy when he came soberly to bethink himself, how great was his crime against a God of such majesty and such goodness, who was the spring of his being and comforts, as well as his righteous governor and his judge: And then he could no longer love that God of whose mercy he despaired. And thus by losing the sense of the love of God to him, and by impairing or destroying the principle of love to God in his own soul, he lost, impaired or destroyed the truest and the best principles of all holiness and obedience. He could look upon God no longer as a friend whom he was wont to approach with comfort and delight, but he rather avoided his company, and feared or hated all converse

\* Objection. But whatever suppositions may be made by our fancy or reasoning, yet this could not be the real condition of man after his sin, to be thus forsaken of God, &c. because God, as a tender Father of our first parents, was careful to guard and cherish their bodies by clothing them, and he gave them a promise of mercy and a Saviour immediately, *Gen. iii. 15.* and the special aids of his grace on many occasions were vouchsafed to men. He revealed a gospel to them, or a way of salvation, and has been ever since multiplying instances of goodness and grace towards them: This appears throughout the whole bible, so that our only holding up the bible refutes this opinion.

Answer. The great God considered as a righteous governor of the world, and upon the foot of his broken law, which pronounces "tribulation and wrath against every soul that doth amiss," may be well said to forsake his disobedient creature, and that without encouragement to expect divine assistances, &c. These are the representations of the bible concerning God's dealing with sinful men, as lying under the guilt of the broken law, *Rom. iii. 19. Eph. ii. 3.* And in this view even the elect themselves are called "children of wrath by nature even as others;" notwithstanding that God had provided a covenant of grace, whereby multitudes of fallen mankind should be recovered and saved: And he manifested it to our first parents and their descendents in various degrees and on several occasions, even soon after fall.

All this provision therefore for the good of man in this life, or for the salvation of him hereafter, does not hinder the scripture from representing men in their fallen estate under the broken law of works, as miserable and destitute of God's favour, and without hope.

converse with him, as an almighty enemy; and the further he departed from God, the more did the power of sin increase in him, and the love of God died.

3. By indulgence of some sinful appetite or passion, contrary to the dictates of reason and judgment, he weakened his reasoning powers, and gave such a loose to passion and sense after this victory, that it more easily prevailed over him in all following instances, as is common in his posterity even to this day: Reason opposed and beclouded by strong passion loses it's clearness of judgment; and when it is abused and disobeyed, and counteracted by sensual powers, it grows weaker in all it's exercises about truth and duty, and it's natural and original influence to govern our actions is greatly diminished. The more frequently we indulge an act of sin, the more are we blinded in our true judgment concerning the rule of duty and our violation of it, and the more sensible power does sin gain over us: Then every new temptation works with greater efficacy, and repeats it's assaults with more success: And these victories of sin over the fallen creature, must be still more easy and frequent, when he hath lost all just grounds to expect any manner of divine aids or influences.

Thus it is easy to conceive, how man by committing one sin against his conscience, and by cheating or violating his own reason, by indulging his appetites or passions to prevail over his understanding, and losing his sense of his maker's favour, was quickly deprived both of his holiness and his peace, his virtue and his happiness. His judgment and reason being weakened by his abuse of them, are more easily imposed upon for ever after, and more liable to be deceived in matters of sin and duty, and the restraints of reason and conscience being enfeebled, temptation prevails upon him continually.

Proposition IX. Then sinful and miserable man going on to propagate his kind, according to the law of creation in his own image, and according to the constitution and covenant between God and man, produced all his race in the same degenerate, sinful and miserable state, and circumstances, whereinto he had plunged himself.

Thus mankind are born with evil inclinations, and in the ruin and dishonour of their nature without the divine favour, and without the divine image, cast out of his covenant of love, thoughtless of God, or averse to him, vain and sensual in their desires, exposed to temptations from within and from without, and without any claim or just pretence to divine aid or protection. They are led away by the principles of flesh and sense from early years in opposition to the principles of reason, and to the law of holiness: Their judgment is blinded and biassed on the side of appetite and passion, they are often deceived, and they take delight in their delusions: Truth and duty become less natural to them, and less inviting: They wander in quest of happiness among sensible things, and immerse themselves in vice and folly; they grow up in sin, they rebel against their maker, they throw themselves still more, and further out of the favour of God, by fresh disobedience, and thence arise the iniquities and the miseries of the inhabitants of this world, even from their youngest years, to death and the grave.



**Proposition X.** To make it yet farther appear, that mankind from their infancy and early years are under tokens of the displeasure of God on the account of sin, let it be considered here, that the first man who sinned might be justly deprived of some of his former blessings by God himself, as a direct punishment of his own sin, as well as by natural consequence he lost others of them: This is evident from what is said before. Now except the mere consciousness of sin, the shame and pain of self-reflexion, or anguish of conscience, which is the natural effect of personal guilt, and belongs only to the personal transgressor, what is there of all the blessings which the first man is supposed to lose either by natural consequence, or to be deprived of, as forfeited to his maker's justice, which his children do not also lose? They seem plainly to be deprived of them by reason of this sin of their parent, because they are blessings which they would have been possessed of, if their parent had stood innocent.

Let us enquire into particulars: Are they weakened in their understanding as well as he? Hath not their appetite and passion too often a superior and prevailing power over their reason as well as his? Are not their thoughts and inclinations early immoral, carnal and sensual, and averse from God and things spiritual? Are not their wills perverse and corrupt? Are not the evil principles of pride, malice, revenge, envy, working in them by nature? Are they not subject to powerful temptations on all sides, which are generally too strong for them? Are they not liable to diseases, to injuries from other creatures, to wounds, pains and poverty, to hunger, thirst and nakedness, to miseries of every kind, and to death itself, as well as their first parent? If therefore all the natural evils, which fall upon, or are inflicted on the first sinner, on account of his moral evil, fall also on his posterity, always excepting anguish of conscience and self-reflexion, is it not evident that they are joined with him in his fall, and that they are fallen from their maker's image and favour together with him? For we can never suppose they all would have been naturally, or from their nativity, so vicious, and subject to so many miseries, and so destitute of blessings, had they been propagated by a parent who had continued in the perfect favour and image of his maker.

**Proposition XI.** Nor is it strange to suppose, nor is it hard to conceive, that this universal taint or infection, this general degeneracy and desolation of human nature, both with regard to sin and misery, should be conveyed according to an original, wise and holy constitution of God by the means of natural generation from one man to all his posterity; for we see the very same thing actually done continually, in God's wise and holy providence. Do we not find the same sort of vice and iniquity, of disease and death, transmitted from parents to children, and that sometimes for many successive generations? As for instance:

**Instance I.** In sins. How often do we find a proud, a passionate, a false, a malicious temper, a lewd or a sottish inclination, transmitted from parents to children; so, that the features of their faces are scarcely so much copied out in the off-spring as the vices of their nature? And in some houses from age to age, there is a race of drunkards or adulterers, of cheats or thieves, of cruel, proud and malicious wretches continued in the world.

**Instance II.**

Instance II. In miseries. How common a thing is it also to have the gout, the scurvy, the stone conveyed down from one generation to another? How does the king's-evil descend to distant posterity? How often does frenzy or madness run in the blood, and taint whole families? How frequently do the diseases of an infamous name, derived from the lewdness of predecessors, make the lives of their off-spring short and miserable? And how many instances are there of a great part of a household that from one generation to another die of the small-pox, or a consumption of the lungs, in their youth, or in the midst of their days?

Now these are evident and unquestionable matters of fact with regard to particular sins and miseries, diseases and death; these things are certain beyond all contest, and why may we not easily suppose the same matter of fact to be true with regard to the general depravation, misery and mortality of human nature? Though the evidences of this general contagion may not appear quite so plain and so obvious, and within the grasp of our survey, yet perhaps reason may have as forcible arguments for it, and by this parallel instance may more easily solve the conduct of providence in this universal depravation of nature.

And indeed I think such parallel instances never would have been found among mankind, were it not for the first and general condemnation which came on all men by the sin of some first parent, and the general depravation of all in that one head of our race; on which the next question proceeds.

## Q U E S T I O N IV.

*But has it not an appearance of injustice in the creator and governor of the world, to make so many millions suffer for the sin of one?*

Answer. **T**HIS appearance of injustice is in some measure relieved, if you consider this one man to be the natural head and fountain of all the rest; even as a sickly and weakly animal among the brute creatures propagates a race of feeble and sickly animals, according to the common law of creation and propagation, viz. that every creature should produce it's own likeness in nature and quality: And the off-spring are exposed to the miserable consequences of those diseases, or sickly qualities which the parent animal communicates to them together with their natures.

And if it should be thought hard or unjust, that a race of intelligent beings should be naturally subject to these laws of animal propagation, together with all the sinful and miserable consequences of it, yet the supposition of the first man being set up as a representative, a surety, or federal head of his posterity, as well as he was their natural father, will do much toward the removal of all remaining appearances of injustice in this part of the providence and government of God.



And indeed I must confess, it is my present opinion, that the mere doctrine of the animal propagation of man, according to the natural law of creation, is not a sufficient relief to this difficulty, without supposing the first father of mankind to be a common federal head and representative of his posterity, as well as the natural spring and fountain of them. And the reason is this :

Reason. Because if this scene of misery arise merely from the first parent being the natural spring of his race, it seems to impeach the goodness and equity of God, who has constituted this nature by a mere arbitrary act of his will: But if it arise from this federal headship, then it is owing to man's sin and God's rectoral justice and wisdom, punishing that sin according to this covenant \*. But these two suppositions put together, I think, do best absolve and clear the conduct of providence, and the divine government from all imputations of injustice ; especially if we consider and remember the following things.

1. Happiness might have been secured to all mankind by this constitution, as well as forfeited and lost. If there was on one side so great a risk as the innocence, welfare and happiness of mankind entrusted with one person, so that sin and misery would be brought upon millions if he sinned and lost the image of God and his favour, there was as great an advantage allowed on the other side to all mankind, even the everlasting security of their innocence, welfare and happiness, if this one person continued in his obedience, and preserved himself in the image and favour of his maker : And there appears, so far as we can judge, to be so much equity in this constitution, that if we had no intimation of this account of things from scripture, yet the reason of the thing inclines us to believe, that this might probably be the original appointment of God, the righteous governor of the world.

To enforce this sentiment, let us consider, that if the first man, who stood the surety of his posterity, had fulfilled the obedience required during all his time of trial, it would have appeared as an hardship upon all his posterity to have had each of them a single state of dangerous trial † imposed upon them too, which might have exposed them to temptation, guilt and misery: For since it is plain upon such a constitution, that they were to be involved in the guilt and misery of the first man, if he did not go through his trial well, and maintain his innocence and obedience ; it seems reasonable also, that if he did finish his state of trial well, the advantage of it should have redounded to all those who stood represented in and by him, and confirmed their happiness.

You

\* If it should be objected, that this federal headship is an act of God's arbitrary will as well as the natural headship, and so both cases are alike ; I answer, that the federal headship is a most eligible thing to all their posterity, if all had been present to give their consent to it ; and for that reason I call it federal : But a mere arbitrary act of the God of nature seems to carry a harder imputation on God.

† Doth that man write the sincere sense of his own mind and conscience, who charges these expressions about " a dangerous trial for *Adam's* posterity if *Adam* had stood," with this supposition or inference, that " we are none of us upon a state of trial now, and that *Adam* alone was upon trial for us all ? " and yet to shew that he means this unjust censure, he spends almost two pages to prove, that we are in a state of trial now, because there is a day of judgment coming, when every single person shall be rewarded according to his works.

But let such a man know, that we have ever owned and granted, that we are in a state of personal trial at present, and that the day of judgment is designed to decide that important event. But let it be remembered also, that this is upon the foot of a new covenant proposed to the world since the fall of *Adam*, not that old covenant whereby *Adam* was tried, and having broken it by sin, was condemned and forfeited his immortality, and his other blessings both for himself and his posterity.

You will say, what then would have become of all the millions of mankind in succeeding generations? I answer,

Answer. They might have been seized as *Enoch* was, and translated to the upper world after some appointed time of obedience here on earth. You will query then,

Query. "Would not this time of obedience have been a season of trial to them?" I answer,

Answer. Not a state of dangerous trial, whether they should be happy or miserable; but a season of proper trial and exercise of obedience to prepare them for different degrees of advancement in heavenly places, according to their fidelity and diligence.

And by the way let it be observed, that if the first man had maintained his innocence, and his posterity been established therein, no man would have complained of it, but with thankfulness all would have accepted it as a divine favour and a happy covenant.

2. Remember what was before hinted, that this was the most probable and the safest way, to secure happiness to mankind by one man's having this vast and important trust committed to him; viz. The innocence and happiness of all his posterity; for he was thereby laid under much stronger obligations to watch and guard against every temptation, and to use more vigorous endeavours to maintain his maker's image and favour, than any single person could be, who had only his own happiness to take care of. By this means all the springs of benevolence and compassion to fellow-creatures, and all the tenderness of paternal love and pity to a numerous off-spring, both which principles doubtless were very strong in innocent man, were awakened and set at work to guard against sin, as well as the powers and motives of self-love, and all the principles of self-preservation: So that this constitution of God had not only justice and equity in it, but goodness and kindness.

3. Let it be considered also, that this is a common thing among men, for one person to be a natural representative, and as it were, to become a trustee or a surety for his posterity thereby; by which means they enjoy or sustain the honours or the dishonours, the riches or the poverty, which the merit or crime of their forefather hath procured. If a subject receive from his prince the honour of nobility, and be made an earl upon the account of his merit, together with the royal endowment of a large estate to support the honour, this estate and this honour will descend together to the latest posterity, and the eldest male of his family in all ages is an earl, and enjoys the estate which is annexed to the title. But on the other hand, if a nobleman rebel against his king, and is attainted of high treason, or proved guilty and condemned, he loses his estate and his honour together, he loses the favour of his prince at court, and that nobility which is the image of his prince; and together with him all his posterity are cut off from their pretensions to the honour and the estate: Nor is this ever counted unrighteous dealing among the governors of the world, why then should it be imputed as unrighteous to the great God who is the supreme governor of all worlds?

4. I might add also in the last place, that even where a person is not the natural head or fountain of life to others, yet he may be made their common legal or federal head, their representative or surety to act for them, so that they shall enjoy the benefits of his loyalty and prudence, if he behave and act well, or shall suffer many miseries if he be guilty of rebellion or folly. Is

not



not member of parliament made the representative of the whole county or town, and entrusted with the liberties of those whom he represents? If he assist in making good laws, the town or county enjoys the benefit of them; but if he join with others to give up his own and their liberties to the hand of a tyrant, they also become slaves together with himself. So a plenipotentiary is sent from a republic, suppose from *Holland* or *Venice*, to transact affairs of war or peace, and the whole community which made him their representative, either obtain great advantages, or are exposed to many miseries, according as this plenipotentiary manages his own and their affairs with prudence and faithfulness, or suffers himself to be governed by rash and foolish principles, by negligence or falsehood? Now if any person who is not naturally the head and fountain of others, may be made their federal head or representative, much more may a natural head be appointed to represent them.

And if these things are so far from being charged with injustice in the common affairs of men, that they seem as it were necessary in some cases from the nature of things, why should it be reckoned unjust with God to deal with man in the same manner? And why may not all mankind with the same reason be said to fall into condemnation and ruin in their natural and federal head, and yet the great God be just and righteous\*?

## Q U E S T I O N V.

*Though the justice of these transactions may be granted in some measure, where the representative is chosen by the actual and free consent of all those whom he represents, yet since this was not the case between the first man and all his posterity, since they never consented that he should act for them, nor entrusted him to pass the trial in their stead, therefore why should they fall under the penalty and misery due to his folly and guilt?*

**T**O which I answer these several ways.

1. In one of the cases amongst men which was described before, viz. Where a nobleman by his treason exposes his latest posterity to disgrace and poverty, he was not chosen the representative of his off-spring, and yet the disadvantages that come upon them through his treason are not reckoned unjustly inflicted, though the crime was committed some years or ages before they were born: And indeed, as I have intimated before, how can any person be supposed to be a more proper surety and representative of a large multitude than the common father of them all, who has the obligation of paternal love to take care of his off-spring, and who may justly be supposed to be most worthy of that post of trust and honour.

2. There are a great many instances in scripture, in the common transactions of providence, and the government of God among men, where the children

\* See an objection answered at the end of the eighth question.

dren have been so far esteemed as parts of their parents, or as one with them, that they have been rewarded with considerable blessings, and that through several generations, upon the account of their fathers piety or virtue; and they have been also deprived of very great privileges, afflicted with sore diseases and calamities, and even punished with death itself, on the account of some criminal head of their family. So much has it been the way of God's dealing with men in many cases, that there seems to be something of a law of nature in it, that a parent should be a surety for his off-spring, especially while children are not capable of acting for themselves.

And doubtless there is a justice in this manner of proceeding, which is well known to God, though not always so visible to us, for the judge of all the earth must do what is right, he cannot, he will not do any wrong. The seed of *Abraham* were rewarded for the obedience of their father. *Gen. xxii. 16-18.* The *Rechabites* in their successive generations, have a promise of a long entail of blessings, because of the honour and obedience which they paid to their father *Jonadab*. *Jer. xxxv. 17-20.* The throne of *Judah* was continued in *David's* house for many generations, because of *David's* piety and zeal. *2 Sam. vii. 16.* *Phineas* had the promise of a long priesthood in his family, because of his zeal for God. *Numb. xxv. 12.*

And as blessings were thus conveyed, so were punishments. The seed of *Ham* were cursed with slavery, for their father's crime. *Gen. ix. 25.* All the children were swallowed up by an earthquake, for the rebellion of *Corah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram* their fathers. *Numb. xvi. 31.* \* *Achan's* family were stoned and perished with him for his theft and sacrilege. *Jos. vii. 24.* The children of the *Canaanites* were destroyed together with their parents for their abounding iniquities. *Deut. xx. 16-18.* The leprosy was transmitted to the seed of *Gehazi* for his sin of covetousness and lying, *2 Kings v. 26, 27.* Fathers in this case are made as it were the sureties and representatives or trustees for their children, though the children do not actually and formally agree to it; yet surely God is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. *Psal. cxlv. 17.*

And we see these events frequently in providence now-a-days. Some families have as it were a manifest entail of blessings upon them, and some an entail of diseases and miseries, poverty and disgrace, on the account of their parents conduct. And I think this is not to be attributed merely to their natural descent from such parents, but in the government of God, parents are made and esteemed a sort of trustees for their children in the good or evil things of this life, which renders a succession of blessings or curses in their families more just and equitable.

3. Though all mankind were not actually present to consent that their father should be their representative, yet the appointment is so just and so equitable in the governor of the world, and also there is so much goodness in it, considering that they were to have enjoyed immortality and happiness if he had kept his innocence, that none of the race of *Adam* could reasonably have refused this proposal. For this father of mankind, as I have shewn, is supposed to have as much wisdom and holiness, and love to himself and resolution to maintain his own innocence and happiness, as any single person among them could

\* The scripture leads us to believe that most of their children perished with them, *Numb. xvi. 27.* though some, or all of *Corah's* sons might be absent and escape, chapter xxvi. 11. *Hob. Beni* sons.



could have; and he would have the stronger motives of benevolence and fatherly pity to make him watch over his conduct, and to guard him from sin, having the whole concern of the happiness or misery of his off-spring devolved upon him. The care of thousands, dear to him as his children, and whose peace or pain, whose life or death depend on his conduct, would naturally awaken all his watchfulness beyond the mere care of his single self.

And if we suppose all his posterity to have been endowed with the clear reason and wisdom, the sagacity and solid judgment, of innocent man, and to have had this question proposed to them, "whether they would each act for themselves in a dangerous state of trial, or have their common father appointed as a representative to act for them;" surely they must have chosen their common father to have been their representative: For their reason and wisdom would have assured them that their innocence and happiness were safer in his hands than in their own, in as much as the obligations that lay on him to secure it both for himself and for them, were much stronger than could lie on every single person acting only for himself.

#### CONFIRMATION of this S C H E M E.

To conclude: I think we may venture to say, that this universal mortality and death, which even our adversaries allow to be derived from *Adam's* sin, and all that long train of sorrows and miseries, which are come upon all mankind, young and old, must arise originally from some "federal transaction of the great God, as a governor, with their first parent, or parents;" and some covenant made with him for their posterity, either expressed or implied, whereby they all justly fall under these evils and disadvantages: Or else it must arise from the sovereign arbitrary will and appointment of God himself, that upon our first parents sin, all their posterity should become thus mortal and miserable as themselves.

Now those who deny this our scheme or federal representation of things, are generally very tender and fearful of allowing any such hardships to come upon creatures by the mere arbitrary will and appointment of the creator, lest they cast a blemish on the divine goodness and equity. And yet I cannot find any possible way to avoid this imputation on the equity and goodness of God, unless the universal misery and death of mankind be derived from some such covenant or federal constitution, whereby they were all as it were included in one head, and he as their great moral representative acted for them all, and by his sin involved them all in one ruin: Whereas if this ruin be derived from their first parent, considered merely as their natural head, the charge or imputation will fall plainly upon the absolute and arbitrary will and sovereignty of God as creator, who thus appointed it.

And let it be observed, that this would be such an instance of sovereignty too, which the posterity of this first man could never have wisely chosen nor consented to, as a thing beneficial to them; whereas this cannot be said concerning the original federal constitution of the first man to be the representative of his posterity, which was eligible by the wisest creature, as well as kindly, wisely, and equitably appointed by the creator.

Q U E S T I O N VI.

*Man is a creature made up of two distinct parts, soul and body : Now if both these were derived from the parents by a natural propagation, then all mankind may be said to derive their vicious appetites and passions, and sinful inclinations from their first parent, which had corrupted and spoiled his own nature by sin : But since it is generally agreed, that the body only is propagated from the parents, but the soul of every infant is immediately formed by God himself, and united to the infant-body, how is it possible that the soul should be defiled with sinful principles, and partake of vicious inclinations, when it is only the body that properly comes into the world by generation \* ?*

Answer I. **A**S the soul of the first man by sinning against God, injured and violated the habits or principles of virtue and holiness that were in his nature, by boldly venturing to act contrary to them ; so the vicious motions, or irregular appetites of the flesh, grew stronger in him daily, and prevailed more and more against his reason and his better powers ; and these sinful ferments of animal nature, these irregular passions and appetites to unlawful objects, or excessive appetites or inclinations to things that were lawful, grew so strong in this first man, that the soul frequently complied with them, and committed new sins against the laws of his maker.

Answer II. These sinful ferments of the flesh, these irregular appetites, these motions of corrupt passion, so far as they are seated in the flesh and blood, are conveyed down from the original sinner, in greater or less degrees †, to all his  
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\* Let it be observed here, that not the *calvinists* only, who suppose the first man to be the legal representative of his posterity, are obliged to answer this question, and to solve this difficulty ; but almost every sect and party of christians, who allow any thing of original sin or degeneracy, are under equal obligations to remove it.

† Though original sin, so far as it is imputed, is equal in all the race of *Adam*, for it is the imputation of *Adam's* sin, or condemnation by it to suffer sorrow and death ; yet original sin inherent, or the corruption of nature, which is propagated from the first man to all his off-spring, has various degrees in different persons. The very animal juices and ferments, in the formation of particular human bodies, may have more or less of the vicious tincture in them. And this may be partly owing to the virtues or vices of immediate parents, or other ancestors, or the particular tempers, humours and constitutions of the father or mother. Hence we say of some persons, they have more natural virtues than others ; that is, good-temper, compassion, moderation, temperance, &c. And others have more natural vices, such as, cruelty, envy, pride, drunkenness, wantonness, &c.

The reason of this seems to be founded in the present nature of things, though we may not always descry the immediate and particular causes. But the general cause and ground of the propagation of particular vices to children, must be referred originally to their common interest in the guilt or condemnation of *Adam's* first sin. Without this I cannot vindicate the providence of God in the propagation of any particular vices by the appointed laws of nature.

And if it be enquired, why some have more native vices than others, since the ground or demerit of all, is one and the same : I answer,

Answer. That it is owing to the mere mercy of God that every child has not as vile and corrupt and vicious a nature or temper, as the worst ; and if every one were equally vicious in their animal temper, the government of God would be justified in the permission of it.



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off-spring in continual succession; and the soul, in it's infant-state, is perpetually impressed and allured by these vicious motions, appetites and passions of the flesh; and it as readily complies with those that are accounted criminal, as with those that are innocent.

It is true indeed, in the mere infant-state, the soul has no knowledge of God, or his law, of virtue or vice, of it's own duty or sin; and therefore, in it's mere infant-state, the actions are not properly human or moral; nor can they be actually criminal in the sight of God, so as to contract actual guilt, till years of knowledge and understanding, and till the mind and will are capable of knowing, chusing and refusing moral good and evil; and at what time this is to be determined, the great God only knows: But when it is capable of exerting any actions of the will with understanding, and such as are properly human and moral, it contracts actual and personal guilt, by these sinful compliances with the flesh or animal nature. Thus original sin, especially that part of it which consists in the corruption of our nature, is evidently conveyed and communicated by the flesh; and thence it comes to pass, that the principles of sin in mankind, and the evil habits both in the soul and in the body, are so often called the flesh in scripture, because the flesh is the means of the propagation of sin, and because the vicious motions and ferments which are in the flesh, lead the soul astray to forbidden actions.

It is granted, the soul has reasoning and reflecting powers, and is furnished with judgment and conscience, yet these are very young and feeble in childhood, and the soul seldom calls them into counsel to enquire or advise; for it finds it much easier to comply with every animal appetite and passion. Thus it practises vice, though in less degrees, as it passes from infancy to childhood; thus it grows up to taste, to indulge, and to delight in forbidden enjoyments. Then as it's knowledge increases, it sins against the plainer dictates of conscience, and with a more criminal consent of the will; thus it encreases it's guilt, and strengthens the habits of sin, both in the body and in the mind, and grows up towards perfection in iniquity, unless restraining or recovering grace prevent.

QUES-

Q U E S T I O N VII.

*But if we allow that it is possible the new-created soul should be thus corrupted, yet is it agreeable to the justice or wisdom, or goodness of God, to create so many millions of souls, pure, innocent and holy, as they must be in their own natures, coming from the hands of God, and to unite them immediately to such bodies, derived from sinful parents, and infected with vicious ferments and appetites, whereby they are so early, and almost unavoidably led into sinful practices and defiled thereby?*

And, to make this question still more difficult, it might be added,

*Is it not contrary to the justice and goodness of God to create innocent souls, and unite them to such bodies derived from sinful parents, whereby they are subject to many painful sensations, such anguish and agonies, and early misery, before they can know any thing of good or evil, or have committed any actual transgression?*

Answer. **P**ERHAPS, this is the greatest difficulty in the whole doctrine of original sin\*, and therefore I shall offer at a humble endeavour to to answer it in a more particular and distinct manner, by the following steps or degrees of reasoning.

Reason I. Though the soul of man be created by God himself, without depraved or sinful qualities in it, yet it never exists or comes into being, but as a part of human nature; and that not as a piece of new workmanship from God's hand, but as a part of mankind who are propagated from the first parent, by the continued power of God's first creating word, "be fruitful and multiply:" *Gen i. 28.* And thus, though the soul really comes from God rather than from the parent, yet man is to be considered as propagating his kind, much in the same manner as brute-creatures and all animals propagate their kind: And their descendents or off-spring are tainted with any poison, disease or painful infirmity, which is mingled with the blood or animal juices of their sires or their dams. And this is according to the law of creation, and it can hardly be otherwise in the nature of things.

You will say, man does not propagate his kind by the mere mechanism of flesh and blood, and animal ferments; for it is the original and constant creative decree of God that produces a new substance, a human soul, and joins it to this body; whereas the off-spring of brutes are propagated, and come into existence, by the mere mechanical agency of flesh and blood, without any other particular act of the divine will or power, or any creation of a new substance. To this I answer,

I i 2

Answer.

\* As abstruse and difficult as this question is, yet almost all parties of christians, who acknowledge any thing of original degeneracy, are obliged to answer it, as well as those who are called *calvinists*.



Answer. That perhaps few or none of the common appearances of nature, or the constant daily events in the corporeal world, come to pass by mere † mechanism, or the impulse and necessary effects of the motions of the particles of matter without the influence of some superadded laws of nature, beside and beyond the necessary properties of matter; which laws proceed from God's constant uniform agency upon matter, such as the law of gravitation, or the mutual tendency of all the parts of matter towards each other, which is a law of nature, or decree of creation, and is in reality the constant uniform agency of God on the inanimate world: And some suppose elasticity, electricity, magnetism, &c. to be of the same kind, as well as all vitality in the vegetable and animal creatures.

And in this sense brutes propagate their kind, not merely by the mechanical motions of flesh and blood, but by some original creative decree of God, or constant law of nature, whereby matter is impelled into such particular vital motions and forms, and kindled into life in a succession of generations, by a constant uniform act or agency of the divine will.

Let me add also, that it is by this universal divine agency, all animals borrow their breath of life from the air, which is an extraneous substance, which yet is then counted a part of themselves, and is called their breath, and their life.

In like manner, when the infant-body of man is so far formed as to become fit for union with a rational soul, the soul then comes into existence, in union with the body, by an original creative decree of God, or a settled law of nature; and thus, the man and the brute, in their long successions, are both formed by the power of that antient law of creation, this almighty creative word, "be fruitful and multiply."

I add also, that the soul, though it be a distinct substance coming from God, yet coming into existence in this manner by a law of nature, becomes a part of the man as much as the breath of life, which is an extraneous substance borrowed from the air, or as the blood of the child, which is hourly made out of the food of the mother.

Reason II. In this view of things, the soul of the infant is not to be considered or judged of as a single separate being, but as always in union with the infant's flesh and blood, and as making up a compound creature of the human species, propagated from the parents as effectually to all intents and purposes, as though the soul itself proceeded directly from generation as well as the body.

Reason III. If *Adam* had maintained his innocency, the universal and original law of propagation, would have been just the same as now it is; and the soul had been brought into existence and union in the same manner, and would have kept it's original and native bias and inclination to holiness; for the animal body would then have promoted it rather than led it astray as now it does. And according to the first covenant, the soul of the child might have also hoped, or perhaps by prayer and dependence, have humbly claimed sanctifying influences, to preserve it from temptation and to keep it innocent.

Reason IV. But since the soul, in the first moment of it's being, belongs to a human body derived from the first man who sinned, and that according to the rules

† By the words "mechanism and mechanical," in this place, I mean only the mere effects arising from the natural and essential properties of motion and matter, considered only as a piece of solid extension moved: Sometimes the word "mechanism" is taken in a larger sense, so as to include all the superadded laws of nature or motion, which are impressed and maintained, through all the material creation, by the divine will; such as gravitation, mutual attraction and repulse, &c.

or laws of creation and providence, it becomes hereby a son or a daughter of fallen man, and according to the law of creation it is naturally involved in the same circumstances of ruin with it's parent: As the buds and branches that grow out of a rotten tree fallen to the ground, partake of the corruption and ruin, and speedy death of the stock; or as a feeble and diseased young brute animal partakes of the infirmities and diseases of it's sire or dam; or as the child of a traitor is born a beggar, though his father were once a lord; or as the son of a lewd and diseased person derives perhaps both a lewd and diseased constitution from his parent.

Reason V. Then being one of the race of sinful man, the young creature comes into the world under the common estrangement of the whole race from God by sin, according to the original law of creation, and the covenant made with it's forefather, whereby the descendents or off-spring come under the same circumstances with the parent, whether good or bad: And thus the child has no just claim to preserving or securing grace, and amidst all the temptations of the flesh has no right to any good influences or divine aids, but is left merely to the faculties of it's intelligent nature. It is esteemed in the sight of God, as a part of the race that is fallen from their allegiance and from his protection, have lost his image and his favour, and have no hope but in and by the methods of recovering grace revealed in the gospel.

And by the same supposition of the formation and union of the human soul, by some constant original law of creation or nature, and acting as uniformly as gravitation on matter, we answer the difficulty of the soul's becoming subject to the sensations of pain and anguish: At it's creation and union to the body, it becomes a child of *Adam*, and is exposed to the pains of nature, as a part of the curse coming on the first sinner, and on all his natural posterity, whose representative he both stood and fell. But there is hope of deliverance in the gospel from the pains as well as the sins which came into human nature from our first parents; blessed be God for this relief.

To conclude; as I have acknowledged this to be the very chief point of difficulty in all the controversies about original sin, so I am doubtful whether this solution sets the matter in such a sufficient light, as to take away all remaining scruples from a curious and inquisitive mind. I confess it is the most probable hypothesis I can think of, and shall be glad to see this perplexing enquiry more happily answered. But if the case itself be matter of fact, that souls are defiled, and exposed to pain, by being united to human bodies so vitiated, we are sure it must be just and equitable, because God has thus ordered it, though we should not find out a happier solution of the difficulties that attend it, in this dark and imperfect state.



## Q U E S T I O N VIII.

*Suppose it were granted, that this representation of things, if it were true, would in a great measure account for that universal deluge of sin and misery which has overspread mankind, yet what reason have we to believe it to be true? Does the word of God, which is our truest and safest guide, give us the same representation of things, or support this scheme?*

Answer I. **T**HE difficulties and darkneses which attend this important question, “how came sin and misery into the world?” are so many and great, that if, by reasoning on these subjects, we can but find any hypothesis, or supposed scheme of transactions between God and man, which will give a tolerable solution of these difficulties, and lead us through this dark scene of providence, without any just imputation or reflexion upon the wisdom, justice and goodness of our creator, it ought to have considerable weight with every reasoning and enquiring mind, if it be not contrary to scripture, though it should not be asserted, and expressly maintained in scripture. It was this same perplexing enquiry that led several of the heathens and *greek* philosophers into many vain imaginations, and betrayed some of those professors of wisdom into various wild fooleries and atheistical impieties.

Some of them thought that all things were produced by mere chance, others ascribed it to a necessary fatality and irresistible connexion of causes and effects; some of these allowed a first cause or some divine being to set things in motion at first, but without any subsequent interposure or government of a wise, a righteous, or a merciful being. The best of them, that is the *platonics*, fell into the doctrine of the pre-existence of all human souls, and thought that all of them had sinned in a former state, and were thrust down into these bodies, subject to such perverse appetites, unruly passions, and huge miseries, as a punishment for those former sins. Others indulged a fancy that there were two supreme beings, one the spring of all good, and the other the spring of all evil: The *persians* also took up with this opinion, and even a sect of christians was deluded with this doctrine, who were called *manichees*. So great were the darkneses that surrounded this enquiry, “how came sin and misery, that is, evil both natural and moral, to be so universal among men?”

It is evident that this general corruption and calamity, which has overspread all the race of man carries in it at first sight such a hard or doubtful idea of the conduct of God, their maker, and has raised in many a thoughtful person such reflexions upon the goodness and justice of God, and such hard thoughts of the almighty being who formed them, that it ought to be esteemed a great happiness, if we can but by way of conjecture and humble reasoning find a probable method, whereby these difficulties may be relieved, and the objection against the goodness and justice of our maker refuted or silenced\*.

Answer II.

\* Those who oppose the doctrine of original sin will neither allow our arguing from reason or revelation.

Quest. VIII. Does the word of God give this account of things? 247

Answer II. Though God hath not thought fit to reveal to us at large in his word, all these particular transactions between himself and the first man whom he created, yet there might be all this and more revealed to the first man; and it might be set before him in full light, to secure his obedience and deter him from sinning.

But if we collect together all that is revealed concerning this subject, we shall find that the word of God leads us into many of the same solutions of these difficulties which our reasoning powers have proposed. Scripture gives us much the same representation of the entrance of sin and misery into the world, as we have already heard, if we will attend with diligence to the revelation which God has made, and this appears in the following particulars.

Proposition I. It is plainly taught us in scripture, that God introduced mankind into the world by the formation of one single pair, one man and woman, whom he called *Adam* and *Eve*. *Gen.* ii. 7. "The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Verse 18. "And the Lord God said, it is not good that man should be alone: I will make him a help meet for him." Verse 22. "The Lord made a woman out of the rib which he had taken from the man, and brought her unto the man." *Gen.* i. 27. 28. "So God created man, male and female created he them; and God blessed them, and said to them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." *Gen.* iii. 20. "And *Adam* called his wife's name *Eve*, because she was the mother of all living." *Acts* xvii. 26. "He hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth."

Proposition II. God created man at first in a holy and happy state, in his own likeness and in his own favour, *Gen.* i. 26. "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness;" and that none of the brute creatures might molest or injure him, but all of them might be for his service, he said, "let them have dominion over the fish, and the fowls, and the cattle, &c. so God created man in his own image:" verse 27. And what this image consisted in, besides in his spiritual nature, and his immortal state, and his dominion over other creatures, we are told by *St. Paul*, *Eph.* iv. 24. where the apostle speaks of the new man, or the restoration of fallen man to his primitive temper, "which, says he, after God, that is, after the likeness of God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." See more, page 189. *Eccles.* vii. 29. *Solomon* assures us, "God hath made man upright."

Our fathers, as well as some present writers, have abundantly proved this doctrine from several places of scripture; and our adversaries have endeavoured to shew from the light of reason, that it does not agree with the reason and nature of things, and therefore, say they, scripture must be otherwise explained; and they are forced to labour hard to give some strained and perverse interpretations of it to support their scheme: And yet when we come in our turn to search what the reason of things will say on this subject, as is done in the present treatise, then it is replied, "why do we not immediately take our account from scripture?" And we are upbraided, that we set a candle before the noon-day sun, that we weaken the evidence of a certain rule by bringing over it what is doubtful and fallacious.

Whereas all that I have attempted to do here, is to shew that reason goes a great way to teach and prove what scripture asserts, and that reason and scripture agree, as far as reason goes, in one and the same account of this matter. And thus we confirm our belief of this great article of original sin, which we learn both from observation and reason, as well as revelation. Sometimes indeed we introduce one first in order, and sometimes the other, and we place this subject in every light, both of scripture and reason, while we are representing their mutual agreement: And what is there in this conduct that is worthy of accusation, reproach or blame?



right." And *Moses* says, when God had finished all his creation, he surveyed it, and found it all agreeable to his mind. *Gen. i. 31.* "God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good:" It was all according to his idea and his will, and well-pleasing in his sight. Man the last of his creatures, as well as all the rest, was very good, was holy and happy.

Proposition III. God originally appointed, that *Adam* when innocent should produce an off-spring in his own holy image, or in the same circumstances of holiness and happiness in which he himself was created: And appointed also on the other hand, that if he sinned and fell from his innocent state, he should propagate his kind in his own sinful image, which may probably be implied in those words, *Gen. i. 26—28.* "God said, let us make man in our image, and let them have dominion over fish and fowl, &c." And God created man male and female, and blessed them, and said, be fruitful and multiply, and have dominion over the fish and the fowl, &c. that is, when you are multiplied, let your seed maintain this sovereignty, this dominion, which is a part of my image, in your several succeeding generations.

And *Gen. v. 1—3.* "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God he made him; male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name *Adam* or man. And *Adam* lived one hundred and thirty years, that is, after his sin and his loss of the holy image of God, \* "and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." verse 5. that is, his own sinful and mortal image, and called his name *Seth*. And "*Adam* died. verse 6—8. And *Seth* also lived, and begat sons and daughters" in this mortal and sinful state, and he died also as *Adam* his father did before him, and his children after him.

It is not to be supposed that *Moses* in this brief history of the first generations of men, should make such a particular repetition of the image or likeness of God in which *Adam* was created, in this place, unless he had designed to set the comparison in a fair light, between *Adam's* begetting his son in his own sinful and mortal image or likeness, whereas he himself was created in God's holy and immortal image: And more especially when the design of the chapter is to shew how every generation of the sons of *Adam* died, it is obvious that *Moses* designed also to shew how this course and custom of dying came into the world, that is, by *Adam's* bringing his posterity into the world, in his own image, as fallen from God and liable to death.

Proposition IV. God was pleased to put the man whom he had made upon a trial, of his obedience for a season, he placed him in a garden of *Eden* or pleasure, he gave him a free use of the creatures for his comfort, but forbid him to eat of the fruit of one tree, even the tree of the "knowledge of good and evil; for said he, in the day that thou eatest of it, thou shalt surely die," *Gen. ii. 17.* that is, thou shalt from that time be liable to death: In which threatening were doubtless included all the infirmities, pains and miseries of this life which tend toward death and destruction, together with death and destruction at the end of them.

And it is not at all improbable, that God should reveal to *Adam*, that he should be the representative of his posterity, and that the consequences of his obedience,

or

\* That *Adam* lost this moral image of God by sin, is plainly implied, *Eph. iv. 24.* where we are said "to be renewed after this moral image, viz. holiness."

or of his sin, should fall upon them as well as upon himself. All that appears as narrative and real fact in the bible, might be represented in the springs and causes thereof to *Adam*, so far as God pleased.

Proposition V. As *Adam* was under a law whose sanction threatened mortality and death upon disobedience, and there was a symbol or seal of it, viz. the "tree of knowledge of good and evil;" *Gen. ii. 16, 17.* so it is most highly probable, or rather certain, that God favoured him with a covenant of life, and a promise of life and immortality upon his obedience, because there was another tree appointed to be a symbol or seal of this covenant and promise, that is, the tree of life: So that if he had not sinned against God, he should have eat of that tree, and been established in immortality. *Gen. ii. 9.* "Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree, &c. the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil;" the one to be a seal of the promise of life upon his obedience, the other a seal of the threatening of death on his disobedience: And therefore after his sin God would not suffer him to taste of the tree of life. *Gen. iii. 22, 24.* "Now lest he put forth his hand and take of the tree of life, and live for ever, — God drove out the man from the garden."

And we may suppose this tree of life did not merely signify the confirmation of *Adam*, in life and immortality if he had continued obedient, but that it also included some advance of happiness, since the fruits of this very tree are made use of in the new testament, particularly *Rev. xxii. 2.* to signify the advanced delights and satisfactions which true christians shall enjoy in heaven by the grace and salvation of *Jesus Christ*.

It may also be observed here, that some ingenious and rational divines have supposed, that each of these two trees, viz. that of knowledge and that of life, bore fruits naturally suited to their federal or sacramental design: That the fruit of the tree of knowledge being poisonous, would convey into the blood of the eater such juices as should irritate irregular appetites and passions, should raise them to an immoderate degree, and should also vitiate the vital powers of man with diseases, and by degrees bring him down to death. And that the fruit of the tree of life being suited to maintain the vital principles of animal nature, should keep the flesh and blood in a temperate state of health, and preserve the appetites and passions in that moderation, as to be always subject to reason and within the rules of innocence: And that it had also some latent virtue, to heal all manner of disorders which could possibly come upon human nature, if any could come, in a state of innocence and virtue. It is described as a plant both of healing and of immortality. *Rev. xxii. 2.* And God would not suffer *Adam*, who was guilty of death, to taste of it after his fall, lest he should raise some false hope thereby to have healed himself of all the poisonous effects of the forbidden tree of knowledge, and should neglect the salvation of the promised *Messiah*.

But the chief reason for which I mention these two trees here, is to shew, that as there was an appointed figure, seal or symbol of immortal life and happiness, as well as of evil and death, both growing in this garden of paradise: So there was a real covenant or promise of life made to persevering obedience, as well as a law that threatened misery and death to man, if he were disobedient to his maker.

Perhaps also we might farther prove, that there was a covenant of life and promise of immortality, and advanced happiness upon condition of perfect obedience, from many texts of scripture.



The first is *Rom. ii. 7.* where the apostle is rather representing the terms of the covenant of works, than the terms of the covenant of grace, and says, "God will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil; but eternal life, with glory and honour to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour, and immortality." And verse 10. "glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good." Here let it be observed, that the apostle, from the eighteenth verse of the first chapter to the twenty first verse of the third, is evidently laying all mankind under condemnation by the law, and not describing the salvation which comes by the covenant of grace; and therefore he uses the words glory, honour, peace, immortality, eternal life, which are the promises of a covenant of works, but not a word of pardon, grace, or salvation, which are the promises of a better covenant: And he represents the means of attaining these original blessings to be "working of good, and patient continuance in well doing, *ἡμετέραν ἐν ἑργῷ ἀγαθῷ*, that is, continuance in one good work" without interruption or imperfection; but not a word of repentance and faith, as the means of obtaining these blessings. These are therefore the proper terms of the law of innocency and covenant of works, and this is the promise made to perfect obedience, by which no man now since the fall can be justified, as is expressly asserted, *Rom. iii. 20.* though innocent *Adam* might have attained immortality, eternal life, honour, and glory by it.

Text II. It is the covenant of works with the terms of it, as expressed in the books of *Moses*, which is cited by *St. Paul, Gal. iii. 12.* "The man that doth the commands shall live in or by them:" And *Rom. x. 5.* this is called "the righteousness of the law," that is, that which intitles a man to the promise of life. And *Rom. vii. 10.* "The commandment of the law which was ordained to life," shews that life and immortality would have been the reward of obedience to it.

Text III. It will add perhaps some force to this argument, in order to prove a promise of glory and immortality made to *Adam*, if we consider, that when the apostle expresses the fallen state of man, he says, *Rom. iii. 23.* "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," that is, have lost all hope of that glory of God, that glorious state in immortality which God promised, and to which man would have been entitled by his obedience, as chapter ii. verse 7. before cited.

Text IV. There is another text also which has been used to prove, that *Adam* was not merely under a law with a threatening, but also under a covenant with a promise; and that is, *Hosea vi. 7.* "They like men have transgressed the covenant: But in the original it is, they have transgressed the covenant like *Adam*;" which imports that *Adam* was under a covenant of life, as well as a law that threatened death: For there must be a promise of life as well as threatening of death to make a law become a covenant. But I proceed to the next proposition.

Proposition VI. *Adam* broke the law of his maker, lost his image and his favour, forfeited the hopes of immortality, and exposed himself to the threatening of God, to many sorrows in life, and at last to death, *Gen. iii. 17.* "And God said to *Adam*, because thou hast eaten of the tree which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread, till thou return unto the ground;—for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Now

Now that *Adam* lost the image of God, that is, broke his habit of holiness, or destroyed the inward principle of virtue and piety, is evident from the nature of things, as I have shewn under the third question, proposition the eighth. By making such an inroad upon conscience, by sinning against so much light, by giving such a loose to sinful appetite, by losing both his own delightful sense of the favour and love of God, and thereby losing his own love to God; his reason and conscience grew weak to subdue or restrain his inclinations to evil things, his corrupt appetites still prevailed further upon him, for he was forsaken of God, and had not any peculiar aids from heaven to resist temptation.

And that he lost also the favour of God, and some peculiar privileges of the state of innocence, is plain; for he who used to converse with God with pleasure, and was well acquainted with the voice of the Lord God in the garden, by former delightful converse with him, *Gen. iii. 8.* now "heard the voice of the Lord in the garden, and *Adam* and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord:" And when God called after him, verse 9. *Adam* said, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and hid myself."

Here it may be noted, that it is very probable, though *Adam* and *Eve* had no garments in their state of innocency, yet they were not entirely naked, but were covered with a bright shining light or glory, as a token of their own innocence, and the divine favour and presence; such glory as angels sometimes appeared in, and such as *Christ* wore on the holy mount, such as arrayed him like a bright cloud at his ascent to heaven, and such as saints shall put on at the resurrection, when they shall be raised in power and glory. But God may be justly supposed to take away his clothing of glory from them, upon their sin, as a token of his withdrawing his favour and presence: For without this supposition how could they be said to be more naked after their sin than they were before? And how could our first parents be painfully sensible of any nakedness, if they had not lost something which clothed them?

God also further manifested his displeasure, by "cursing the ground" for their sakes, and pronouncing upon *Adam* and *Eve* many sorrows, pains and labours in this life, and their "returning to dust" in death. verses 16—19.

Proposition VII. *Adam* after his sin propagated his kind, or produced his offspring according to the law of nature; not in the moral likeness or image of God, not in righteousness and true holiness, but in his own sinful likeness, as one fallen from God, with irregular passions, appetites to evil, corrupt inclinations, and sinful nature. See *Gen. v. 1—3.* cited under proposition III. Those expressions in *Job* seem also to refer to the same degeneracy. "What is man that he should be clean, or the son of man that he should be righteous? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." *Job xv. 14.* and chapter *xiv. 4.* *David* also says the same thing, *Psal. li. 5.* "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Some persons would persuade us, that these words are only an hyperbolical aggravation of *David's* early sins, and propensity to evil from his childhood: But the text is strong and plain in asserting sin some way to belong to his very conception, and to be conveyed from his natural parents, which is a different idea from his actual sins, or even from his early propensity to sin in his infancy: It asserts and shews the cause or spring both of this evil propensity and of his actual sinning which operated before he was born: So that these expressions cannot be an hyperbole, or



figurative exaggeration of what is, but it seems to be a downright fiction of what is not, if original pravity be not thus conveyed and derived.

If we look into the beginning of the bible, we shall find *Moses* describing the universal corruption of mankind. *Gen.* vi. 5. "Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart of man was only evil continually." And verse 12. "All flesh had corrupted it's way on the earth." And chapter viii. 22. "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." So universal and so early a corruption must be supposed to spring from an universal and early cause, that is, their propagation from a sinful original.

That the ancient *jews* were acquainted with this doctrine, and that this was the sentiment which they had derived from their reading the old testament, will sufficiently appear to any one from the *apocryphal* writings, which were the product of some wise and knowing men among them. See *2 Esdr.* iii. 21. "For the first *Adam* bearing a wicked heart, transgressed and was overcome, and so be all they that be born of him. Thus infirmity was made permanent, and the law also in the heart of the people, with the malignity of the root\*, so that the good departed away and the evil abode still. *2 Esdr.* iv. 30. "For the grain of evil seed hath been sown in the heart of *Adam* from the beginning, that is, by the devil; and how much ungodliness hath it brought up unto this time? and how much shall it yet bring forth till the time of threshing shall come?" *2 Esdr.* vii. 11. "When *Adam* transgressed my statutes, then was decreed what is now done: Then were the entrances of this world made narrow," that is, full of pain as the *hebrew* imports, in which language probably this was first written: "they are but few, and evil, full of peril and very painful: For the entrances of the elder world were wide and sure, and brought immortal fruit;" that is, in the world of innocency, men would have been born without pain and lived to immortality. Verse 46. "It had been better, that is, happier for man not to have given the earth to *Adam*, or else when it was given him, to have restrained him from sinning: for what profit is it for men now in this present time to live in heaviness, and after death to look for punishment? O thou, *Adam*, what hast thou done? for though it was thou that sinned, thou art not fallen alone, but we all that come of thee." *Ecclus.* xl. 1. "Great travail is created for every man, and a heavy yoke is upon the sons of *Adam*, from the day that they go out of their mother's womb till the day that they return to the mother of all things, that is, to earth." These were the sentiments of the ancient *Jews*.

*St. Paul* mentions his sentiments on this subject in his epistle to *Rome* and *Corinth*, which shall be cited immediately; for he had well learned this doctrine. Nor do I think that text, *Ephes.* ii. 1—4. can be well dismissed from the service of this argument, where the apostle tells the *Ephesians*, "you gentiles were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein you walked according to the course of this world,—and the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we," that is, *Jews*, who were the peculiar people of God, or we christians who are now sanctified, even "we also had our conversation in time past, in the

\* The meaning seems to be this, though the law or rule of duty still remain written in the hearts of men; yet there is such a malignity, or sinful tendency derived from *Adam* our root, that the principle of obedience is departed and the principle of transgression abides, while the conscience preserves the rule of duty in man's heart or soul, and yet he has a propensity or inclination to disobey it.

lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath even as others," that is, as heathens. "Even we were dead in sin," verse 5. This is the plain description of all mankind, both Jews and gentiles. Surely they were not born alive by nature in a state of righteousness, and afterwards made themselves dead in sin; but they were dead-born, that is, born in sin by nature, or through a corrupted nature derived from their parents, and were children of wrath by nature, or exposed to the anger of God. But this belongs rather to the next proposition.

Proposition. VIII. As *Adam* produced his off-spring like himself, destitute of the image of God, or defiled with sinful inclinations, so he also produced them destitute of the favour of God, or in a state of disfavour with their maker, because under the same sentence of condemnation, misery and death together with himself. As I have proved this before, by shewing that pains and agonies, and often death itself, which is the appointed punishment of sin, seizes upon children immediately from their birth, before they are capable of committing actual sin, so there are some scriptures which lead us into the same sentiment, as *Job* xiv. 1. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble." that is, his short life, and his troubles or miseries proceed from his very birth, or his propagation from his sinful and mortal parents: Otherwise God would not not have appointed his noblest creature in this world to have been born to trouble. Yet this is the case: "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards," *Job* v. 7. that is, naturally, for it is owing to his birth and his natural derivation from a sinful stock: We are a miserable race of beings, springing from a corrupted and dying root, prone to sin and liable to sorrows and sufferings.

Yet let it be observed here concerning one man, even *Jesus Christ*, that though he be the son of *Adam* in a large sense, yet by this propagation he falls not under that guilt and condemnation, nor that degeneracy of nature and those sinful propensities which are conveyed to the rest of *Adam's* posterity: And the reason is plain, viz. because he was not the son of *Adam* by natural generation or propagation, but by a miraculous operation of God and his Spirit, taking part of the body, or flesh, and blood of the virgin *Mary*, and making a man-child of it: As *Luke* i. 34, 35. Now this part of the body of the virgin which was assumed by *Christ*, being not a human person, but mere animal matter, came not under the general condemning sentence of *Adam*, and of all those which are naturally derived from him; and it was also purified from any inherent vicious ferments, which might reside in the animal nature of the virgin: And thus *Christ* had no original sin inherent; nor even imputed by the same constitution, and on the same account as other children have; but was perfectly innocent; and consequently he had not been exposed to suffer sickness and death which other children are exposed to, nor subject to any of our sorrows, if he had not been a voluntary undertaker to rescue and redeem fallen man, by having all our sins imputed to him and suffered in our stead. But this is only a thought by the way.

Let us proceed farther in the proof of this sentence of condemnation and death, coming upon all mankind for the sin of *Adam*, and let *St. Paul* in the fifth chapter of the epistle to the *Romans* be brought as a considerable witness. I think this chapter cannot be fairly construed to any other sense. See verses 12—14. On these and the following verses I desire to make these plain and easy remarks.



Remark I. Here *Adam* and *Christ* are set up as two distinct heads or representatives of their several families: *Adam* was the head of all mankind who became sinful and mortal by the corruption of our nature, and *Christ* was the head of the new creation, or of the saints who obtain righteousness and life by divine grace. Verse 12—14. the apostle says, "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned; or as some render it, in whom all have sinned:" And that with full as much or more justice than *Levi* was said "to pay tithes in *Abraham*," his great grandfather. *Heb. vii. 9.* And then the apostle gives this reason to prove this headship of *Adam*: For, saith he, "until the law, that is, from the creation of man till the law of *Moses*, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed where there is no law:" This cannot mean, where there is no explicate and positive law, for the heathens have sin imputed to them who had no such explicate positive plain law given them; but his meaning is, that sin is never imputed where there is no law divinely established, no constitution of duty and penalty at all. "Yet, saith he, death reigned from *Adam* to *Moses*," that is, yet sin was imputed and punished by death, even upon all mankind both great and small, before *Moses's* law: And the inference is, therefore there was some law or constitution during all the time from *Adam* to *Moses*, by and according to which sin was imputed to mankind; and death was executed upon them according to this law. Now what law could that be besides the law or constitution, which said to *Adam* as a representative, and surety for all his posterity, "In the day thou sinnest thou shalt die?"

Remark II. Observe that the apostle carries his argument yet farther. "Sin was imputed, and death reigned or was executed even upon those that had not sinned after the similitude of *Adam's* transgression;" that is, who had not sinned personally against an express and positive command given to themselves as *Adam* had done. Now this must include children or infants, if it does not chiefly refer to them; for "death reigned over them," death was executed upon them; and this must be by some law or constitution, by which sin was in some respect imputed to them who had not committed actual sin; for without some such law or constitution sin would never have been imputed, nor death executed on children. Yet further,

Remark III. Let us consider that death does not come upon those who had not sinned actually and personally as a mere affliction, or as a necessary and natural effect or mere consequent of their father *Adam's* sin and death; but it was at first the threatening of the law, and now it is a proper and legal punishment of sin: For it is said, that this sin brought "condemnation upon all men." verse 18. Now this is a legal term, and shews us that death is not only a natural but a penal evil, and comes upon infants considered as accounted guilty and condemned; not for their own sins, for they had none; but for the sin of *Adam* their legal head, or representative, and surety, according to this constitution, or law, or covenant\*.

In this eighteenth verse, the expression is very strong: "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." It is true the words "judgment came"

\* The author has read what opposition has been made to this natural and obvious exposition of this argument as handled by the apostle in this epistle, and he finds such perverse distortions of the scriptures from their plain sense, and such absurd consequences rising from this opposition, that he leaves what he has here said as sufficient to justify his exposition, to the understanding of a sincere and honest reader, notwithstanding all the boasting pretences to scripture and solemn exhortations to attend to it, which are introduced on the other side.

came" are not in the original; but if these words be not supplied, you must necessarily supply some other word of equal importance to make sense, or you must repeat the word offence, or sin, or guilt; and say, "by the offence or sin of one man, sin came upon all men," who are the seed of *Adam*, or it was imputed to them to condemnation. And it is possible this may be the most proper way of supplying that elliptical way of speaking, viz. by repeating the word "sin, or offence." And so in the following part of the verse, "by the righteousness of one, not the free gift," but perhaps it should be, "righteousness came upon all those, who are the seed of *Christ*, to justification of life\*." And it may be yet farther remarked,

Remark IV. that in the original *greek* it is not said, "by the offence of one, but by one offence," that is, by the single offence of *Adam*, when he stood as the head or surety of all his off-spring, and brought sin and death upon them by his disobedience, as verse 19. "by one man's disobedience many were made or constituted sinners," *κατισθησαν*, that is, became subject to guilt and death by a righteous constitution: And the 16. verse seems to have the same meaning, where one single offence is represented as condemning us through *Adam*, and stands in a way of antithesis or opposition to the many offences which are pardoned through *Jesus Christ*.

Remark V. There is yet a farther reason implied in this chapter, to prove that *Adam* conveyed sin and death to his posterity, not merely as the natural spring or parent of their race by propagation, but as a federal head and representative of all his off-spring, and involved them in his own guilt, or liableness to misery and death by his own act of disobedience. Take it thus. As *Adam* and *Christ* are here represented by the apostle as the two springs of sin and righteousness, of death and life to mankind, which is agreed by all in their expositions of the last half of *Rom.* v. and *1 Cor.* xv. so the one is represented as a type and figure of the other. *Adam* was a figure or type of *Christ* in this very respect, verse 14. And *Christ* is called the "second man, and the last *Adam*," for this very reason. *1 Cor.* xiv. 45, 47, 49. As one was the spring of life, so the other was the spring of death to all their particular seed or off-spring. *1 Cor.* xv. 22, 23.

Now *Christ* is not only a spring of life, as he conveys a new nature and a principle of holiness to his seed, but he is represented as the spring of justifying righteousness, or of justification, and of eternal life and happiness; as procuring it for them by his own personal actions, by his own obedience and sufferings: So *Adam* is not only a spring of sin and death to all mankind who are his seed, as he conveys a sinful nature to them, but as he brings sin and guilt, condemnation and death upon them by his own personal disobedience. And indeed this is what the apostle, *Rom.* v. from the fifteenth verse to the end, chiefly insists upon, viz. it is "by one man's righteousness the free gift, or rather righteousness, came upon all men, that is, all his seed unto justification of life; and it is by the offence of one man all men, who are the seed of *Adam*, are laid under condemnation," verse 18. "As it is by the obedience of one man many were made righteous, or justified, so by one man's disobedience many were made sinners," or stood as guilty and condemned before God †.

It is

\* Or if the word "all" in this place should be construed to mean all mankind, it is still the righteousness of *Christ*, which has provided this way of justification for all men, or this offer of justification to all men, though all do not actually accept of it.

† All the texts cited under this question are explained and vindicated more at large by many writers on this subject, elder and later.



It is true indeed, that *Christ* trains up and prepares his children for eternal life, by making them his children, by renewing them after the image of God his Father, or after his own likeness, or by giving them a holy nature, a principle of divine life, without which it is impossible they should be made actual partakers of happiness; and so he is typified by *Adam*, who conveyed a sinful nature, or his own sinful image to his children: But the chief thing which the apostle seems to have in his eye, in this chapter, is the conveyance of condemnation and death to the seed of *Adam*, and a justifying righteousness and eternal life to the seed of *Christ*, by their being the common heads or representatives, as well as the fathers or fountains, of their distinct households or off-springs; the one involving his off-spring whom he represented in his own sin and death, and the other acquiring for his off-spring whom he represented, righteousness, that is, a right to life and eternal happiness.

Objection I. Some persons have supposed, that it confuses and perplexes our ideas, to treat of mankind thus as one collective body, or to suppose that the race of man have ruined themselves in *Adam* their head; whereas, say they, the scripture often tells us, that God will judge every man personally and particularly according to his own works. I answer;

Answer. It takes away all this supposed confusion, and makes our ideas very distinct and plain, if we consider that in the general sentence of ruin and condemnation for the first sin of *Adam*, mankind may be reckoned as one collective body, under one head, falling under this universal condemnation by the original law of creation, and the constitution of the covenant of works, since it is evidently represented in this manner in several verses in *Romans* v. 12—21. Whereas in the last judgment every one will be personally judged and acquitted or condemned according to their personal behaviour under the several particular constitutions or dispensations both of law or grace which they have enjoyed.

Objection II. We are informed by the word of God, that there have been two general fathers, viz. *Adam* and *Noah*: Now there are three particulars that do summarily and distinctly contain the blessings, endowments and pre-eminence conferred upon *Adam* in his innocent state, 1. The blessing of propagation. 2. The dominion over the brutes. 3. The image of God in which he was made: All which are contained in *Gen.* i. 27, 28. Now the very same blessings and marks of excellency are by God himself declared and pronounced more expressly and emphatically at the restoration of the world by *Noah* and his sons, and for the most part in the same words. *Gen.* ix. 1. "God blessed *Noah* and his sons, and said to them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." Verse 2. "The fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast, and fowl, and fish, &c. They are delivered into your hand; every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you," that is, you have licence to kill and eat them. And again it is said, *Gen.* ix. 6. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: For in the image of God made he man."

Now say the objectors, this is a clear and undoubted demonstration that the judgment which came on all men to condemnation, and the expulsion of man out of paradise, did no way alter the primary relation in which God stood to man, and man to God. The love, regard and providence of God towards mankind in general, were still the same as they were to man at his first formation; and our nature as derived from *Noah*, is attended with the same blessings, endowments and pre-eminence, both natural and moral, which were pronounced or conferred on

*Adam*

*Adam*, our first natural head as soon as he was created : And we no more derived a corrupt nature from our second natural head, than we should have done from the first, if he had never sinned : And whatsoever came upon us in consequence of the judgment to condemnation, viz, death, hard toil or labour, and sorrow, came upon us no farther, nor in any sense or degree, than what is perfectly consistent with the original blessing pronounced on *Adam* at his first creation.

Answer. This objection as formidable as it seems, may have complete and effectual answers given to it in this manner. It is readily granted that all that is contained in the blessing given to *Noah* is very consistent with that curse of God which came upon all men by the first sin ; but that curse is not consistent with the original blessing that was given to *Adam* : And though the words are in the main much the same, yet if we review the history and context, we shall find the blessing of *Adam* and *Noah* differ greatly from each other in all the three particulars mentioned.

1. It is evident that the blessing first mentioned relates chiefly to propagation, and the continuance and support of man on the earth ; but *Adam's* blessing was without those multiplied pains and sorrows, which after the first sin, fell upon women in child-birth : It was a blessing of sustentation, or nourishment of man on the earth, without hard toil and sweat of the brows : It was a blessing without a curse on the ground to hinder or destroy the fruitfulness thereof : It was a blessing without death and returning to our dust, which hinders the replenishing of the earth : Whereas the blessing of *Noah* did not take away the pains of child-bearing from women, nor the hard toil and sweat of men, nor that threatened death, which dispeoples the earth continually.

Let it be observed also, that this blessing on *Noah* seems directly to refer to that vast desolation which was brought on the earth, and the lives of men by the flood, as the context plainly shews ; and that God would not repeat this stroke, nor suffer the earth to be depopulated by beasts or men. *Gen. ix. 1—7.*

And I add farther, though *Lamech* seemed to have the spirit of prophecy when he called his son *Noah*, saying, " This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hand, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed. " *Gen. v. 29.* Yet the curse coming upon the ground abides still in a greater measure from *Adam* to this day, for it brings forth thorns and thistles in abundance. Now *Noah* might well be said to comfort his fellow-labourers on the ground, since he " began to be a husbandman and planted a vineyard, " *Gen. ix. 20.* that is, he invented, or rather greatly improved the art of husbandry and cultivation of the earth, and thereby lightened much of the toil of man and the curse.

2. To *Adam* was given dominion over the brutes, which carries in it more than merely the blessing of *Noah*, viz. " That the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast, " &c. For notwithstanding this fear and dread of the human form and stature, which in many instances appears amongst the brutal creation, yet sometimes, ever since *Noah's* blessing, they now bite or sting men to death, and sometimes tear them to pieces, which calamitous disasters would never have befallen innocent *Adam*, or his innocent seed ; for it was sin only that brought death into the world.

And if *Noah* and his sons had licence to kill and eat birds and beasts, which was not given to *Adam*, a very ingenious writer, doctor *Cbeyne* the physician, supposes that this was designed in the providence of God to shorten the lives of men after the flood, thereby to diminish or limit their great wickedness : And probably it had this effect to shorten life, which vegetable food would have prolonged.



3. The image of God in which *Adam* was made at first consisted eminently, if we will believe *St. Paul*, "in righteousness and true holiness." *Eph. iv. 24.* for the christian is required to "put off the old man, that is, the sinful temper which he brought into the world with him, which is corrupt, and to be renewed in the spirit of their mind, to put on the new man, or holy temper, which after God, that is, in resemblance of God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." Whereas that part of the image of God, which remained after the fall was the natural image of God, viz. the spiritual faculties and immortality of the soul, or the political image of God in a degree of dominion over the creatures; so the image of God signifies. *1 Cor. ii. 7.* Or perhaps in the "corporeal image, or form," that is, in that majesty of stature and countenance wherein God himself appeared and conversed with *Adam* in the garden; but the moral image was lost or defaced, or else it could not be said to be renewed.

I think it is sufficiently evident that the blessing given to *Adam* in innocence, and that given to *Noah* after the fall, differed in such very important things that the one was consistent with the condemnation and curse for sin, and the other was not: And consequently the race of man is far from standing in the love and favour of God in the same manner as *Adam* stood while he was he was innocent.

Thus in a few pages, I think I have made it appear, that the holy scripture both in the old and new testament, and the *jewish* church in the intermediate time, seem to give us the same sentiments of the conveyance of sin, misery, and death from the first man *Adam* to all his off-spring, and encourage us to receive, as divine truth, that same doctrine of original sin, which human reason approves as most probable.

## Q U E S T I O N IX.

*What can the light of nature discover concerning the proper penalty due to the sin of man, or the proper punishment inflicted on man for sin?*

First, **L**ET it be observed here, that we must distinguish between the natural consequences of sin, and the legal penalty appointed for it by God as a governor. The question therefore is not, "what can the light of nature discover of the dreadful consequences of sin among mankind? But what can it discover to be the proper penalty for sin appointed or inflicted by the maker and governor of the world\*." After this distinction we may proceed to answer these enquiries according to the following propositions.

### Proposition I.

\* I know it has been said upon some occasions, that God, as the wise creator and governor of the world, has appointed such a connexion between sin and sorrow, that the natural effects or consequents of sin may be reckoned the appointed or legal penalties of it. And no doubt there is so far a truth in it, as that on some occasions it may be proper to set things in this light, to shew the wisdom of providence. But still it must be acknowledged there is a real difference between the natural connexion of things by God as creator, and the established or appointed laws and rules of government, made by the same God as a ruler of the world: And this will plainly appear in what follows.

Proposition I. The remorse or anguish of conscience is not so properly a punishment inflicted of God upon man for sin; but it is rather a natural consequent or effect of guilt. It is an inward vexation of mind that arises when the sinner seriously considers and reflects on the provocation he has given to his almighty maker by his own folly and rebellion, and a painful fear and expectation of the vengeance due to such personal crimes. This can neither be transferred nor conveyed to any other person whatsoever, but is confined to the heart or conscience of the criminal: It flows from his own consciousness of his own personal offence, which consciousness can belong only to himself, and can raise those sharp inward self-reproaches in none but himself.

Proposition II. Man's continuance in sin after his first crime, and the sinful inclinations and growing depravity of his heart, whether they be considered as in himself, or as communicated to his off-spring, cannot properly be inflicted by the hand of God as a penal evil, or as a legal punishment for his first sin: For though man be a sinner, God remains eternally holy, and he cannot infuse any degree of unholiness into the nature of his creatures, nor constrain them by any positive influence to continue in their disobedience, though they have begun to disobey him.

It follows therefore, that the continuance of man in a course of sin, his vicious inclinations and the depravity of his nature, whether abiding and encreasing in himself, or transmitted to his off-spring, must be conceived rather as the natural effect and consequence of his first disobedience to God, contrary to the laws of his reason and conscience, as I have shewn under question III. propositions VIII. IX. These are not to be esteemed as a proper penalty or punishment inflicted by the hand of God, his maker or his governor.

Yet it must be acknowledged too, that had there not been such a federal representation of all the race of men, in or by their first parent as their surety, whereby the children were fallen under the general sentence of condemnation together with their parents; surely I think a just and gracious God would never have suffered the innocent children of a criminal parent to be infected and tainted with the vicious ferments of flesh and blood, and those corrupt appetites and passions which are now transmitted to children from that first parent; but he would have found a way to prevent that sinful contagion. See question II. propositions IV. V. VI.

But now it may be fairly allowed, since children are involved in this general and original condemnation by the sin of their parent, the great God, as an offended governor, lets his appointed course of nature take its way, and communicate the natural effect of one man's sin to his off-spring in the depravation of their temper, and vicious inclinations\*.

And it may be further allowed, that man having provoked his maker by sin, and he with his off-spring lying under condemnation, they may be all left under the assaults of numerous temptations, and they have forfeited all manner of assistances that they might otherwise have hoped for from their maker against new temptations and new dangers of sinning; so that God may leave man to his own evil appetites, and the inclinations of his corrupt heart; and then he has only the natural powers of his understanding and conscience left him to resist temptations.

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\* See the objections and answers at the end of the first essay.



tations from within and without, which powers are naturally darkened and weakened by his fall.

Proposition III. Man having once broke the law of his maker and violated his allegiance to the universal governor of the world, hath for ever deprived himself of all hope of obtaining or recovering any special favours from his maker by perfect obedience; for he can never undo the evil that he hath done: He who hath sinned but once, can never more plead innocence, or acquire a right to any blessing which he might hope for if he had continued innocent and obedient. Whether this may be esteemed only as a natural consequent of sin, I will not now dispute; but it rather seems a penal forfeiture of all his hopes, and of his maker's further favours.

And this hope of favour from his maker and his God, to be obtained by perfect obedience, is still put further out of the reach of man, when it is evident he continues to practise disobedience, and multiplies his offences against God, his maker, in the course of life.

Proposition IV. Man having sinned against a being so greatly superior to himself in worth and excellency, as well as in authority, he could never do or suffer any thing by way of recompence or penalty, that would make full atonement or satisfaction to God for his offence.

1. All that he could do, in a way of obedience or service for time to come, would be no more than his duty which he owes to his maker by the law of nature; and if he had not sinned, God has a right to all his duty; and therefore future obedience could never atone for a past sin.

2. All that man could suffer would make no satisfaction for the offence: For if offences amongst our fellow-creatures of different characters, such as a neighbour, a brother, a father, a king, are aggravated according to the character and dignity of the person offended, then the offence against God is as highly aggravated above all offences of fellow-creatures, as the nature of God is superior to the nature of creatures: And if this be so, then every offence against an infinite God, carries a sort of infinity in the nature of it: And divine wisdom only can fix the proper punishment for such offences, though divine goodness may join with wisdom, to set the actual limits of it.

Proposition V. But thus much we may infer by our own reason, with more evidence and certainty, that man, by his sin against his maker, has forfeited all his maker's benefits. The great God having given man all that he has, viz. his nature and existence, the life of his body and soul, all his powers, his comforts and his hopes, and this God being offended and provoked by the sin of his creature man, who has by wilful rebellion renounced his allegiance; this God, I say, has a just right to resume all that he has given him, he may take away all his own favours from a rebel, he may annihilate and destroy him utterly, both soul and body: And by this utter destruction, man is punished with the everlasting loss of his being and consciousness, his soul and body, and all their comforts; which destruction, as it is due to every sin against God, so perhaps it is a punishment not improper to be inflicted for the least sin; and yet it is in some sort commensurate to the infinite evil contained in sin, as it is a loss of all blessings for an infinite duration, that is, for ever and ever.

But

But since, in actual transgressions, there are different degrees of aggravation, God in his wisdom and justice may suit the degree of punishment exactly to the degree of every man's offences; and yet, by making any part of it eternal, may answer the infinite demerit of sin. According to the different aggravations of sin, God may deprive the sinner of some of his powers, and of all his comforts, and leave him only an existence in misery for a thousand years, or for ever: He may take away his bodily life, and leave his spirit according to it's own immortal nature, to exist for ever in sorrow and anguish of mind, as a natural consequence of sin; he may deal with him as he pleases, and re-assume as many of his gifts and blessings as he will, limiting the exercises of his own goodness, or his punishing justice, as his wisdom sees fit; and he may also punish him with a most painful sense of new-inflicted evil, as well as with the loss of all good. This seems to me to be the most natural notion that man could arrive at by the mere light of reason, viz. that sin against God forfeits all that man has received from God; and gives God, as a righteous governor, a right to resume it all, or as much of it as he pleases; and perhaps this is what is eminently signified by the word "death," which scripture threatens as due to sin. See more in the marginal note, and question XI. section I. This therefore I shall treat of more largely and particularly.

Proposition VI. But first, I would take notice of that remark, which Mr. *Locke* makes on the last verse of the first chapter of the epistle to the *Romans*, where the apostle expresseth himself thus concerning the wicked heathens, in our common reading, viz. "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death." But Mr. *Locke* endeavours to correct this reading by a direct contradiction of it, and that borrowed from one manuscript only; viz. "Who knowing not the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death:" That is, as he explains it, they knew not that God had pronounced death to be the wages of sin.

I grant indeed the heathens knew it not to be a divine revelation; but their own reason could and might tell them, that if they had offended God, the original and sovereign giver of life, they had forfeited this life, and that God might deprive them of it, that is, put them to death; and as he had given them health as well as life, so he might lead them down to the grave by many and long sicknesses and sorrows, depriving them of health and ease.

Here then is a very natural and evident account whence all the maladies, sufferings, miseries and death that attend mankind may arise. Reason teaches us that they are all the natural or penal effects of sin, and of the anger of our maker for sin: For man being a rational and intelligent creature, must come out of the hands of a God perfectly holy and perfectly good, in a state of innocence, virtue, health and peace; this the goodness of God seems to require: And whatever pains or miseries attend him, cannot be the necessary consequences of his nature as a creature,

\* Here note, that as human life often includes not only existence, but all the blessings that attend it, and all possible enjoyments whatsoever, more especially such as are visible and sensible; so the word "death" in the general notion of it, and in the most obvious and common sense of mankind, may reasonably include a loss of every thing which man possessed, that is, existence itself together with all the blessings of it: And consequently when "death" was threatened for sin, it more obviously appeared to signify, that by sin man forfeited every thing that he had received from his maker. This, I say, might be the first and most obvious signification of the word "death," when it was considered as reaching only to things visible, though afterwards it's sense might be enlarged or limited on particular occasions as the invisible world came further into the notice of men.



creature, because as such he must be made innocent and undeserving of pain; but it must be therefore the fruit of some voluntary choice of evil, or some early and universal offence against his maker. How can we suppose that a just and merciful God would inflict on every man so much natural evil, or pain and death, where there was no moral evil to deserve it, no sin to procure it?

Proposition VII. Reason or the light of nature would further inform us, that since all mankind are sinners, and since God, the righteous governor of the world, sees fit to punish them for their sins, and not to deal with them as though they were innocent, the same righteous God, as I hinted before, would think it proper to punish greater iniquities with greater miseries, and to deal more gently with those whose sins were of a lesser kind; or that such who have some degrees of virtue found among them, or less degrees of guilt, should feel a lesser and easier punishment.

Proposition VIII. Now the common observation that every man makes of the affairs of this world may sufficiently inform him, that there is almost an infinite difference in the moral characters and practices of men, and in their deserts of punishment. It is plain as the sun-beams, that all men in the world may be divided into these three sorts of persons.

1. There are some persons of an abandoned and profligate character, whose whole life is a continued affront to their maker; they have no regard to God as their Lord and ruler, they are perpetually guilty not only of wilful neglects of God, but of vile impieties and blasphemies against him, as well as false or malicious, cruel or bloody practices against their fellow-creatures.

2. There are many others that have much less degrees of vice or impiety than the first sort, and seem to be led into sin, not from such impious principles as the former, and practise it no farther than the common gratifications of sense and appetite, ease and indulgence strongly allure them: They have several natural virtues, as temperance and good-humour, and compassion, they do some good and but little mischief in the world, so that if man were to be their judge, he would not know whether to pronounce them good or bad, or perhaps rather would justify them.

3. There are a few whose lives for the most part are filled up with outward practices of virtue with regard to themselves and their neighbours, as well as religion towards God, and there seems to be sincere love in their hearts towards God their maker as far as man can see; there are all the signs of true piety in them, though it is granted there is no man innocent, "not one of all mankind perfectly righteous, who doth good and sinneth not." These three distinct characters plainly appear to every observer, viz. the very good, the very bad, and the indifferent, which we cannot certainly determine whether they be good or bad.

Proposition IX. The same common observation will also inform us, that there are no such actual distinctions in the providence and conduct of God as a governor, made amongst mankind, by the comforts or sorrows which are allotted to them here in this world, as do in any measure answer to or correspond with these three distinct moral characters of men according to their visible virtues or vices.

vices\*. Sometimes it falls out in the course of providence, that the best men, and those that have least of sin in them, are made very unhappy even till death, by many calamities or oppressions: And the worst of men abound in the comforts and pleasures of the present state, with very few uneasinesses: And we find among the middle sort of men, some a thousand times more unhappy than others. We sometimes see, that men are rendered more miserable in this life, even by their virtue, which will not suffer them to practise iniquity, in order to procure their pleasure or peace. The strictness of their piety exposes them to many persecutions from the wicked world. In short, in this world, all things come so much alike to all, that the love or hatred of God is not to be known by the course of his daily providences, as *Solomon* and *David* his father have both observed and complained, *Eccles. ix.* and *Psal. lxxiii.* if *David* wrote that psalm.

Proposition X. From this view of things, every considering person must infer, what some of the ancients did infer from the same view, viz. that the death of the body must not make an entire end of man, but that there will be a future state after death, wherein the righteous governor of the world will call men to account for their behaviour here, and will manifest the wisdom and equity of his government, by rendering to every one according to their works; he is a God who knows the inward real characters of those whom we call indifferent, and sees all the alleviating or aggravating circumstances of every sin: And he will measure out the sorrows of evil and impenitent persons in a just proportion to their sins, and will make his final retributions exactly answerable to their present characters.

This argument assures us that sins, especially of greater aggravation, will be punished in a world to come after the death of the body. And since the soul is in it's own nature immortal, God the great governor of the world may punish sin by not seizing the forfeited soul into death, that is, by letting it live in anguish of conscience, or other inflicted pains from his own hand: For where every thing is forfeited, the governor may resume as much or as little as he pleases.

Proposition XI. Whether the great God, the governor of the world, will only continue the souls of men in their state of natural immortality after the death of the body, and judge and recompense them hereafter only in that separate state, according to their behaviour here; or whether he will raise their bodies up from the dead, that men may be treated according to their moral character, and recompensed hereafter both in body and soul, this enquiry cannot be resolved and determined by the light of nature. The mere reason of man can never prove certainly the doctrine of the resurrection, though it may look something probable that those spirits who have actually obeyed or sinned in their union with animal bodies, may be again united to bodies, which may become instruments of their recompence, whether of pleasure or punishment.

Proposition XII.

\* Though I mention three characters of men here, I do not suppose there are three different states of men now, or will be hereafter, for all the indifferent are really good or bad, they do really love God, or they do not love him. But this life is a state of such disguise and darkness, that we mortals cannot judge who are inwardly good, and who are inwardly bad, among those who obtain the middle or mixed character; and therefore I call them indifferent.



Proposition XII. And though, I think, it can never be fully proved by the light of nature, that an offended God will certainly forgive the sins of the best of men, so as to demand no punishment of them in the other world, and for this reason many of the ancient heathens thought there would be a state of penance or purgation, even for men of moderate virtue, yet it may be certainly concluded, that from the equity and holiness of God, the punishment of the wicked and profligate among mankind, shall be vastly greater than the punishment of those who had much more virtue, and better sentiments and practices of piety. Nature teaches us to say with *Abraham*, *Gen. xviii. 25.* " Shall the righteous be as the wicked ? That be far from the Lord : Shall not the judge of all the earth do right ? " And therefore some of these heathens supposed the souls of these very vicious persons after death, to be sent into sharper torments, and that for a longer duration, if not for all the length of their natural immortality.

Proposition XIII. And I think it may be also inferred, with some probability, from the most abundant goodness of God, that if he does not entirely pardon the penitent, and if there be any punishments necessary in the other world, for more virtuous persons by way of purgation, because even the best have sinned, not only these punishments shall be much lighter than the miseries of those vicious creatures who have lived a long life of constant impiety ; but it seems probable also from the same infinite goodness, that there will some reward for those that have sincerely repented of their sins, in the faith or hope of his mercy, have asked forgiveness of their maker, and have endeavoured to honour him, though with many imperfections, and to serve their fellow-creatures from a right principle of love to God, and love to man, if any such shall be found among mankind. But this leads directly to the next question.

## Q U E S T I O N X.

*What can the reason of man, or the light of nature find out concerning the recovery of man to the favour of God? Or what hope of pardon and happiness can sinful mankind ever obtain by the mere exercises of their own reason?*

Answer. **H**UMAN reason, exercising itself on this subject, might probably fall into such a train of thoughts as this.

Proposition I. It is certain that a sinner's repentance of past crimes, and asking forgiveness for them, together with sincere promises of better obedience, are no satisfaction to a governor for the dishonour done to his law by any capital offence : Nor is it ever counted in human governments a compensation for the injury done by the criminal to the authority of the governor, or to the public welfare : And therefore the criminal among men must be punished by the law,

to

to guard the honour of the government, and secure obedience to the law, and he must yield his life for his offence, notwithstanding all his repentings. Nor is the governor thought too severe or cruel who requires it, nor is his goodness blemished by it. And in the same way of reasoning, we may suppose that repentance, and asking forgiveness, and better obedience for time to come, are by no means a satisfaction to the great God, the lawgiver and the governor of the world, for the injury done to his divine authority and his government by former sins: Nor can his goodness be justly reproached if he insist on the punishment of the offender. If lenity should be always practised, and sinners should come off always without punishment, there would be no sufficient guard and defence to maintain the authority of the lawgiver amongst his subjects, and to deter them from new offences.

I add further also, that it is not possible that any future virtues of a former offender, or any future instances of obedience, can make atonement to God, and give a recompence to him for past iniquities, or repair the honours of the broken law, because the creature owes his highest and best services to God his maker, according to the law of creation, and he can never do more than was his duty.

Proposition II. Yet when we consider God not only as a righteous governor, that will vindicate his own honour and authority, but also as a God who is holy, and loves holiness in every degree, and is also the most beneficent and merciful Father of his miserable creatures, we may reasonably suppose he will encourage and reward every little appearance of goodness that he sees amongst them, where he can do it with a salvo to his honour and government. And when we further observe, there will be wicked creatures in abundance for him to make the objects of his vengeance, and to testify his severe displeasure against sin, and vindicate the honour of his broken law; surely we may suppose it very probable by the light of nature, that where any person of the race of men does repent of sin, does return to his obedience to his maker, and practise piety towards God, and single and social virtues, so far as he has any powers, opportunities or advantages to find out and perform his duty, we may probably suppose, I say, and hope, that God will favourably pass by the transgression of such creatures; and especially when we consider, that the prevalence of corrupt nature sometimes is almost unavoidable in the present state of sin and temptation in which they were born, we may reasonably hope that the blessed God will put all these considerations into the balance, and will make gracious allowances for them: Upon this account we may have some reason to think, that virtuous and pious men, though their hearts or lives are blemished with some sins and frailties, will not go without some sort of reward. It is probable that God will make it appear in a future state, that his goodness has some regard even for imperfect virtue, in repenting sinners, as well as his justice demands it's due honours in the punishment of criminals, who continue in their rebellion without remorse.

Proposition III. It might be added yet further, to enforce this consideration, that since God preserves mankind notwithstanding their daily offences, and affords them so many circumstances of ease and pleasure, giving them sun and rain, and food and delight in this world, together with the long forbearance of punishment; since he continues their natural powers, and the operations of



the reason and conscience of men, dictating their duty to them, approving their good actions, and reproving them for their vices, in order to excite and encourage them to the practice of virtue, we may probably infer that he is now standing upon some terms of mercy with them, that they are upon their good behaviour, and are placed in a state of trial or probation, for future rewards or punishments, and that they are not utterly abandoned as condemned criminals, without hope, and merely waiting for the time of execution.

Proposition IV. From all these considerations the light of nature may probably infer, that God has designed some way of salvation or recovery for poor sinful wretched mankind: And that if there be any such thing as an atonement necessary to answer for the sins or failings of virtuous persons, so that God may forgive them with more honour to his law; it is probable that God will provide this atonement for them, since it is impossible that the guilty creature man can find out or produce any such atonement for himself, he having forfeited all that he has by sin, and nothing that he can do can answer the present and future demands of obedience; much less can he make a recompence for a past disobedience.

Though reason is utterly at a loss to find out the secrets of divine government, and the methods that God has taken to honour his law, and vindicate his authority by the sufferings of his Son *Jesus Christ*, which are revealed to us in the gospel, yet the reason of man may hope, that repenting sinners, and men who practise virtue and piety, so far as the light of nature can assist them, shall be made partakers of this mercy and this salvation, though they know not the particular methods whereby it is brought about; for if the continued forbearance and goodness of God invites and calls them to repentance, which *St. Paul* confesses, we hope it will also invite and incline him to forgive, where this goodness has attained it's proper design on his creatures, and brought them to repent.

Proposition V. Reason also will give us this further information, that if God has provided any way or method of recovery for sinful and miserable man to his image and to his favour, he has taken effectual care that some part of mankind shall be certainly recovered and saved by it: And that he has not left it merely and utterly to the uncertain prospect of what the free-will of men would do toward their own recovery, under all the disadvantages of a tempting world without, and sinful appetites and passions within, lest all the provided methods of recovery be neglected, and none receive it, and be saved. Surely the all-wise God would take care that such a glorious salvation should not be provided and proposed in vain.

Proposition VI. It is probable therefore that the grace or goodness of God, in conjunction with his wisdom, would or did fix upon some persons among degenerate mankind, to whom he resolved this way of salvation which he has provided should be effectual: And for this end, either did or would place them in circumstances of less temptation, or give them greater advantages for the improvement of their minds, and by proper providences would awaken their natural consciences, or set before them the differences of virtue and vice, with all their consequences in a future state, in a stronger light, and with more  
powerful

powerful conviction; and that all these persuasive methods might not miscarry, it is probable that he would give some divine touch to their spirits, if it were necessary, and would cause them to point toward himself, and a future happiness.

Proposition VII. Nor is there just reason for any criminals to complain against the goodness of God, for effectually leading some of their fellows into a certain and secure method of salvation, since they sustain no injury thereby. Why should their eye be evil, because God is good?

Let this matter be examined and scanned as far as it will by the powers of reason and present observation, and we shall find no such terrible consequences from the doctrine of God's choice, or appointment of particular persons to obtain this eternal salvation, as some learned men have imagined, provided that none of the rest are thereby prevented and hindered by any act of God.

Proposition VIII. Our eyes see plainly, and our constant observation of mankind assures us, that far the greatest part of them are not pious and holy, but sinful and rebellious against their maker, and are wilfully running on in the paths of sin and madness, to condemnation and punishment; we must be convinced daily, that the bulk of mankind are by no means fit to be admitted into a heaven of happiness, which consists in the knowledge, love and enjoyment of God; nor are they at all inclined to repent and return to God; but that they are rather rendering themselves daily fitter objects of divine displeasure; and, to all appearance, the greatest part of them are like to be punished in another world, for sins committed in this.

Now when the great and blessed God had provided a means of recovery sufficient for all these sinners, and yet foresaw them disinclined to accept of it, would it be unjust in him to resolve that some should certainly be recovered by it? Might he not, in consistence with equity and justice, form a decree that all these vicious and wretched creatures should not be utterly miserable; but that he would take certain and effectual care to save some of them from this madness and misery? When he had provided such a way of recovery as might secure the honours of his own government, might he not resolve to spare and save a considerable number of them? And, in pursuit of this resolution, might he not set things necessary to their salvation in such a light before their eyes, as that they should see their danger and their only hope, and be powerfully persuaded to repent of sin, and trust in the divine methods of mercy? Might he not thus engage and incline them to lead new lives, that their souls might be fit for happiness after death, in another state?

Would not such a conduct be a manifestation of great grace and favour in God to men, even though he did not extend this favour to all the race of mankind? What injury doth he do to the rest on whom he doth not bestow this favour? May he not, as a wise and righteous governor, see fit to let many rebellious subjects go on in their own impenitence and folly, till they receive the just desert, as well as necessary consequence of their own rebellions? What possible reason of cavil can be raised against a sovereign creator, Lord and benefactor, if he should act thus with his sinful creatures, since his goodness to some doth not in the least hinder others from obtaining the salvation which is offered to all?

Proposition IX. As for the rest of degenerate mankind, does not their actual continuance in their rebellion and sinfulness shew us, that though the way of salva-



tion provided has a sufficiency in it to save them all, yet their salvation is not secured? But they are continued under many mercies, and the common operations of reason and conscience, with various degrees of advantage for virtue and piety, with hopeful encouragements to excite them to repent of sin and return to God, and very probable hopes of acceptance, if they sincerely repent of past sins, and practise the duties of love which they owe to God and man, and betake themselves to the free mercy of God, so far as it is revealed, and so far as reason and conscience can guide and enable them in this imperfect state. And can our reason say, that the great God is bound to go farther than this toward the recovery of sinful man?

Proposition X. These are some of the reasonings of the light of nature on this divine subject. It must be granted indeed, that if we had no assistances from revelation, the wisest and most thoughtful of men, by the mere light of nature, would hardly draw out their inferences to this degree of evidence and just hope: For if they could, why had not *Socrates* and *Plato*, those excellent philosophers, said the same things long ago? Are we so much better furnished with genius and the powers of reasoning than they were? Why should we be so vain and conceited of ourselves? It is certainly divine revelation and the advantage which we have from the word of God among us, that enables us to carry our reasonings to such a length.

Yet when we have many noble hints and lifts given us by the bible, to spread these scenes and ideas before us, and to carry us into this train of consequences; we may then make it appear, that these propositions are either certainly or probably connected with each other, and that these consequences may be esteemed the result of fair and free reasoning on this subject.

Proposition XI. This might be illustrated by a plain and obvious similitude, or rather a comparison between the sciences of geometry and religion, as the one is assisted by *Euclid*, and the other by *Moses*, and the other holy writers.

*Euclid* has drawn out his reasonings upon lines and circles, angles and numbers, into a noble set of propositions in his books of geometry, and filled the world with most useful pieces of knowledge built upon undeniable demonstrations. Every man has the natural powers of reasoning as well as *Euclid*, and by the advantage of some acquaintance with his propositions and reasonings, or the works of some other great geometrician, a multitude of men have made a rich progress in this science, and can draw up a scheme of geometry, in a chain of just consequences: But without these advantages there is not one man in ten thousand would carry on their reasonings half so far as *Euclid* has done, or find out one quarter of his propositions, or the arguments whereby he proves them. The same thing may be justly said concerning our drawing out doctrines and inferences upon the affairs of God and religion, by the light of nature, with the bible in our hands, which not one man in ten thousand would be able to do, or at least would ever do in fact, without this advantage.

Proposition XII. Let us here stand still and recapitulate some of the things we have mentioned. Let us consider the present wretched degenerate state of all mankind, the giddiness and darkness of their understandings, the power of their prejudices, the

the vicious inclination of their hearts, the influence of evil examples round them, and the universal stream of impiety or idolatry, folly or vice, that has carried away all nations; let us consider how very poor and low, how wretched and ridiculous were the sentiments of men on divine subjects, and the affairs of religion in the days and nations of heathenism; let us reflect how wild are the notions, and how weak the reasonings of men, who are left entirely to the mere light of nature, or who have no revelation but such feeble glimpses and broken hints as they have derived down by long tradition, from the far distant heads of their families, *Ssem, Ham, or Japheth*; let us think with ourselves how exceeding few of the heathens, without some communications with the *Jews*, or some traditional hints of ancient revelation, have been ever led to repent of sin, to make supplication to the true God for forgiveness, to practise piety towards God, or virtue towards men, from a sincere design to honour and obey their maker; let us consider the best schemes of religion and morality that were ever given by the heathen philosophers, and observe how grossly defective they are, and how little they themselves or their disciples ever practised them. Again, let us think of the wisest and best of them, whose virtues made such a blaze in the heathen world, how universally they neglected the love of God, as the principle of their virtues, and the glory of God, as their end of them; for though "they knew God by the light of nature, they glorified him not as God," *Rom. i. 21*. And let us farther review the wretched character that the apostle *Paul* gives of the gentile world, in *Rom. i. Ephes. ii. Col. i. &c.* into what abominable iniquities they were plunged, even whole tribes and nations of men; and if we then reflect how well these accounts of *St. Paul* agree with the reports of modern travellers, I fear we shall find but exceeding few who can make any claim or pretence to the future rewarding grace of their creator. And perhaps, upon a view of these matters of fact, the surest thing that reason can determine is this, that when all shall stand before the judgment-seat of God, the better sort of heathens can arise no higher in their utmost claims or pretences, than to be treated with some lighter punishments; and that the more impious and abominable wretches will be distinguished by more severe and durable inflictions of misery; for the very best cannot lay a just and sure claim to any reward. I will not dare to say this is the utmost favour God will shew them, but this seems to be the utmost certain claim or pretence to favour, which, by the light of nature, they can justly make for themselves.



## Q U E S T I O N XI.

*What does scripture reveal to us concerning the punishment due to sin?*

*Or, what are to understand by that death which the scripture tells us was threatened to man, as the penalty due to the first offence, or as it is inflicted on mankind on the account of sin?*

**I**T is evident from the second chapter of *Genesis*, and from many other places in scripture, that death is the penalty threatened for the sin of man, *Gen. ii. 17.* "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Now under this term "dying," mentioned in the original law of innocency, many of our christian writers have generally supposed every thing to be included which has been ever since called "death," in the old or new testament; viz. "natural death," or the death of the body; "spiritual death," or the loss of God's favour and image in the soul; and "eternal death," or torment both of soul and body in another world. Let us consider how far the word "death" ought reasonably to be extended to each of these.

I. "Natural death," or the death of the body, is one thing plainly designed in the first threatening, beyond all controversy. The natural life of the sinner is forfeited to him who gave it, when he has once broken his allegiance to his creator and supreme Lord. That this is the first and most obvious idea of the punishment threatened, may be plainly proved, because this is the universal, common, and literal meaning of the word death, in all human languages.

This is also the very sense of the same writer *Moses*, when he uses the same words in all other parts of his writings, viz. "Thou shalt surely die; or, in dying thou shalt die." In those places it means evidently temporal death, as might be proved easily if we consult all those places.

And let it be observed, that in those early ages the future and invisible world being very little brought into view, the word death might naturally include in it the forfeiture of all being and all comforts whatsoever, since it evidently means the loss and forfeiture of all visible being, life and comforts; for all these appear to vanish at death.

And this notion of death will not be strange, if we can agree to the learned and ingenious Mr. *Warburton's* sentiment in his "divine legation of *Moses*," viz. that the "doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments is not to be found in the *mosaic* dispensation, nor did it make any part of it;" though I dare not so universally pronounce this opinion true.

Besides, this death of the body was positively foretold to *Adam*, and was the sentence pronounced upon him when he had actually sinned: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." *Gen. iii. 19.* And accordingly we find, that when *Adam* is said to "get a son in his own likeness, that is, in his own mortal likeness," in contradistinction to the glorious and immortal likeness of God, in which the foregoing verses tell us he was first made, *Gen. v. 1 — 3.* Then the scripture goes on to prove it, by shewing how this death was executed: There is a plain account follows

follows of the natural death of *Adam*, and a long succession of the deaths of his posterity, as being made mortal in the image of *Adam*, their natural head.

And as I have shewn before, that not only life, but health and ease, and the comforts of life being the free gifts of God our creator, they are all forfeited by the offence of his creature against him: And all the pains, and sorrows, and sicknesses of this life, which by degrees tend to wear out nature, and to bring man down to the dust, may be justly supposed to be implied in his threatening of death.

And as this natural death of the body is plainly implied in the first threatening as a penalty for sin, to come upon *Adam* and his posterity; so not only all the books of *Moses*, but perhaps all the old testament, do scarce afford us any instances wherein the word "death," properly and without a figure, is taken to signify any thing else plainly but the sorrows and miseries of this life, and the final deprivation of life itself; though, in the first threatening tacitly, it may include the forfeiture of every thing God had before given, so far as God please to resume it. See note, question IX. section VI.

II. The next thing our divines have usually included in the word dying, is "spiritual death." which has been generally extended to signify the anguish of a guilty conscience, the loss of the divine image in holiness, with the loss of the divine favour, and the infliction of new sorrows on the soul. Let us consider each of these apart, and see how far they may be included in the first threatening.

1. The "anguish of conscience" can never belong to any but the personal transgressor himself, because it consists in the uneasy and painful reflexions of the mind of him that has sinned, charging himself with his own act of folly and disobedience. This is the natural effect or consequent of personal sin, and not so properly the threatened penalty of the law. This anguish does not come upon the off-spring of *Adam* by imputation on the account of the first sin; for it can never be imputed to another person by any representation or suretiship: Nor can it ever be conveyed or transmitted by any natural propagation or descent; for, in the nature of things, anguish of conscience can only belong to the very person who is conscious of his own actual folly and rebellion, which another person can never be conscious of\*. But though this cannot be communicated to the off-spring of *Adam*, on account of his sin; yet when they become personal sinners, they feel this anguish of conscience also arising from their own actual transgressions, as the natural consequence of a guilty mind.

2. The "loss of the image of God in holiness," is another thing contained in spiritual death, and in the new testament this is termed by *St. Paul*, a "death in trespasses and sins," *Eph. ii. 1*. It consists in the corruption of human nature, and a bias or propensity toward evil. But this cannot be so properly threatened as the penalty of the law to be inflicted for the sin of *Adam*; for the holy and righteous

God

\* By the way we may take notice here, that though infants have the sin of *Adam* so far imputed to them, as to fall under the sentence of death; and though the sins of the world were so far imputed to *Christ*, the second *Adam*, as to expose him to sufferings of soul and body, and to the accursed death, yet neither infants nor our blessed Lord ever had, nor can have, any anguish of conscience, because this arises only from the actual and personal sin striking the mind of the actual and personal transgressor with sharp reflexions and inward remorse, as conscious of his own fault. We may all be grieved and sorry that *Adam* our father sinned, but we cannot have painful inward remorse, reproaches or self-reflexions, on the account of the sin or sins which we ourselves never committed.



God cannot be the author of sin in his creatures; he cannot infuse sin into the nature of man, nor take away his virtues by any divine act, or make him vicious\*. This must therefore be only esteemed as a natural effect or consequent of man's first sin, as I have shewn under questions III. and IX.

3. The soul's loss of the favour of God, is another part of spiritual death: The loss of the manifestations of God's love, of friendly converse with him, and any peculiar instances of his grace, may be included in the word spiritual death, 1 *John* iii. 14. "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death:" And perhaps this may be also included in that scriptural expression, *Eph.* ii. 1—3. because they who "are dead in trespasses and sins are said to be children of wrath," or obnoxious to the divine anger.

The words "indignation and wrath," &c. in *Rom.* ii. 8. where the terms of the covenant of works are recited, seem to intimate that this may possibly be included in the word death, as a threatened part of the punishment, and reaches to the soul as well as the body, and that even after it's separation from the body as well as before.

The favour of God was certainly forfeited in a legal manner, by the sin of the first man; this is a proper punishment for sin: For we cannot suppose that God, the righteous governor of the world, will all always treat a criminal as he does an innocent person; but will both threaten and manifest some tokens of his displeasure against him, in order to maintain his authority and government.

4. And not merely the punishment of loss, or the withdrawing of the sense of divine love, but the punishment of sense, as the schools call it, that is, actual pain, sorrow, signified by the words "tribulation and anguish," may be impressed upon the soul by God himself, or by good or evil angels, as his ministers; and this is a proper legal penalty due to sin, and may be included in this "spiritual death." In this sense the devil may be called the "angel of death, or he who has the power of death," *Heb.* ii. 14. as well as that he has power sometimes to kill the body. Under this head we may partly include the fear or dread of all these evils, or of any of them.

These four things then may be included in "spiritual death;" the two first of them as the natural consequences or effects of sin foretold, and the two last as proper punishments threatened: And the dread of them is partly a natural effect as well as a punishment.

Let us proceed now to the third distinction of death, as it is explained by our chief authors who treat on divine things.

III. "Eternal death" consists in the misery both of soul and body, in the invisible world, and in a future state: Thus it is generally explained by our writers, and has been often said to be included in the penalty due to the first sin. Let us here enquire into it.

First, Let us consider it as it relates to the soul of man. The soul is an immaterial and thinking being, it has in itself no natural principles of dissolution; and therefore, so far as we can judge, it must be immortal in it's own nature: But who can say, whether the word DEATH might not be fairly construed to extend to the utter destruction of the life of the soul as well as the body,

\* See question IX. section II.

body, if God the righteous governor should please to seize the forfeiture\*? For man by sin had forfeited all that God had given him, that is, the life and existence of his soul, as well as his body: All is forfeited by sin into the hands of God; and why might not the threatening declare the right that even a God of goodness had to resume all back again, and utterly destroy and annihilate his creatures for ever†.

There is not one place of scripture that occurs to me, where the word death, as it was first threatened in the law of innocency, necessarily signifies a certain miserable immortality of the soul, either to *Adam* the actual sinner, or to his posterity. I say, I do not remember any such text, but will not positively assert there is none.

But suppose this "death" mean the utter destruction of soul as well as of the body, to be a penalty due to every sin, for the "wages of sin is death," *Rom. vi. 23.* even the least sin or offence against God; yet where the sin of man hath any degrees of aggravation, perhaps the divine justice would not destroy the soul, but would continue the soul in it's natural immortality and consciousness after the death of the body, to sustain farther punishments answerable to these aggravations: God may resume more or less of what man has forfeited by sin. And it is a point determined by our Saviour, that continuance in life and misery is a greater punishment than annihilation; for he says, "It is better never to have been born," than to be punished as *Judas* the traitor shall be punished, *Matth. xxvi. 24.*

And since there is scarce any actual sin but what has some aggravations, either greater or less, perhaps there is no actual sinner, but has deserved some continuance of his soul in it's existence, consciousness and misery. And on this account the death threatened by the covenant of works, especially to the actual and personal transgressor, may perhaps, include in it that "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, which is due to every immortal soul that actually doth amiss, *πάσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου κατεργαζομένη τὸ κακόν*, every soul that worketh evil," *Rom. ii. 8, 9.* For as I shewed before, the apostle seems to speak there of justification and condemnation, by a law or covenant of works.

But whether the great God would have actually continued the soul of *Adam* the first sinner, in a state of existence after death, and in a long immortality, to punish his actual offence, if he had not given him a new covenant, that is, a covenant of grace and salvation, this is not plainly revealed nor determined in scripture. It is certain that "the wages, or due recompence of sin is death," whether it mean an utter destruction of soul and body, or else bodily death with a state of misery for the soul after the body is dead. The whole of our life and being and comfort in soul and body, is forfeited by sin, and God may resume more or less, as his wisdom shall direct, in order to punish the guilty according to the greater or less aggravations or demerits of their crimes §.

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Secondly,

\* See note, page 261.

† It is granted that God, considered merely as a sovereign and as just, might resume all from his creature, though he be without sin; but we can hardly think a God of goodness would do it, till sin had made a forfeiture.

§ It is granted, that the first man standing under such a law and covenant as is before explained, hath by sin forfeited all that he had, both life and being with all the blessings of it, for himself and his posterity into the hands of his maker, so far as the rectoral wisdom or justice of God please to resume them; yet



Secondly, The other part of "eternal death," or eternal misery, consists in the raising the body up again from the dead, and rejoining it to the soul, in order to be made eternally miserable together with the soul, or rather to be an everlasting instrument of the soul's misery and torment. But that this resurrection of the body to a state of misery, is threatened in the bible for the punishment of *Adam's* first sin, is what I cannot prove, nor do I know in what text of scripture to find it. The law of innocency threatens death; but as the promise of life made to innocency was "immortality and eternal life" without need of a resurrection, *Rom. ii. 7.* so the threatening of death to sin did not, that I can find, imply a resurrection. It was not said in *Gen. ii. 17.* "Thou shalt surely die, and shalt rise again to new sorrows."

There are several places of scripture wherein the resurrection is rather attributed to *Christ*, and to his undertaking in a covenant of grace, besides that remarkable one, *1 Cor. xv. 21.* "As by man came death, so by man came the resurrection of the dead:" But I know not of any one line in the word of God that provides a miserable resurrection as the punishment threatened to the offence of *Adam*. It is very probable therefore, that the resurrection of the body was introduced by *Christ*, the second *Adam* upon another foot, namely, upon the gospel-proposal of mercy to all mankind in the promise made to *Adam* after his fall, which has been usually called the first gospel, or an epitome of the gospel of *Christ*: And whosoever should refuse this grace, or abuse it by actual impenitence and indulgence of sin, should suffer punishment in soul and body for ever. This "is called the second death," *Rev. xxi. 8.*

So that as the gospel or covenant of grace has provided hope and salvation by *Jesus*, the mediator, for all that would accept of it whether under the patriarchal, *jewish*, or christian dispensation; so those who continue impenitent, and will not return to God according to this new covenant, are exposed to double punishment under the government of the mediator; and he will raise them from the dead to receive the reward of their obstinacy and impenitence, their violation of the law of God, and their neglect of all the means and hopes of grace,

yet it is justly doubted whether the great God would inflict any penalties beyond death, or any punishment in a future world, on those who have no personal sin, but lie only under the sentence of *Adam's* imputed sin. This will be debated in the sixteenth question.

Q U E S T I O N XII.

*What doth the holy scripture reveal concerning the recovery of mankind from the sin and misery of that estate into which they were brought by the disobedience of Adam? And how far does this recovery reach, both with regard to the persons recovered, and with regard to the degrees of their recovery?*

**P**ERHAPS this great and important enquiry may be answered by the following propositions and reasonings.

Proposition I. Adam the first man having sinned against God, and brought such a dishonour on the law and authority of his maker, and tainted his seed with sin, he has thereby exposed himself and his posterity, that is, the whole race of mankind, to death: But God, who is rich in mercy, gave him a promise of a redeemer or Saviour, *Gen. iii. 15.* who should be the "seed of the woman, and should break the head of the serpent;" that is, destroy the works of the devil, and deliver men from that mischief and misery into which sin had plunged them, through the temptation of the devil, who lay hid in the serpent.

Proposition II. God's own and only begotten son *Jesus Christ*, who before the world was with God, who was one with the Father, and was God, was himself appointed by the Father to become the Saviour of mankind, that all those might be recovered by pardoning grace to the favour of God, and raised at last to eternal life, who should repent of sin, and trust in the mercy of God, according to the several degrees of the discovery of it, which should be made in different nations and ages of the world, from the days of *Adam* to the days of christianity.

Proposition III. For this end God appointed this his Son, at a certain period of time to take "flesh and blood upon him, and to become a man, and to be born of a woman, that he might become the seed of the woman," according to his early promise made to fallen man, *Gen. iii. 15.*

Proposition IV. God ordained and sent his Son to preach this gospel of repentance, faith and pardon, more clearly than ever before, and appointed him to obey his law perfectly, and to suffer the sorrows of life and death itself, instead of sinful man who broke his law, that by his perfect obedience and by his sharp sufferings, he might shew how greatly God hated sin, and might vindicate that honour of the law and majesty of God, which the sin of man had violated, and procure for men a discharge from those evils which he sustained, and obtain full salvation for sinful men. The great God, the Lord of heaven and earth, did not think it becoming his dignity and his majesty, to pass by such grievous offences, without some glorious and terrible demonstration of his own holiness, and his abhorrence of sin, even while he designed to save the sinners: His justice, that is, his rectoral wisdom, did not see it proper to exercise his mercy toward criminals, without some vindication of the wisdom and holiness of his broken law, some reparation of his honour, and some recompence to the authority of his government, which had been injured by our sins: Nor would he receive the offending creature into his favour without such a mediator, as could not only plead for the offender, but could make



atonement for his offence. It would be too tedious to enter into the proof of this atonement here. Many and sufficient defences of it are written, and the epistles of *St. Paul, Peter, and John*, are so express in this doctrine, that one would think it needs no farther proof. This is set in a convincing light in two treatises, viz. *“Of Jesus the mediator;”* and, *“The redeemer and sanctifier\*.”*

Proposition V. Nor is it at all improper, or unbecoming the dignity or justice of God, or the state of man, that God should set up one man, even his own Son, to be the second *Adam*, or a head of life and salvation for multitudes, since it is evident that one man, or the first *Adam*, was the head or spring of sin, misery and death to multitudes. Both under the covenant of works and under the covenant of grace, the blessed God is pleased to transact his affairs with men in and by a single person, who was appointed a head and representative of many thousands. And doubtless there were most important reasons for this conduct of God.

Proposition VI. But since this appointment of salvation by *Jesus Christ*, was the mere effect of God's free mercy and sovereign good-will, therefore he was at liberty to appoint the exercise of his own grace, and the gift of this salvation to fallen man, in such ways and manners, under such limitations, with such terms or conditions, and in such degrees, as he pleased.

Now, to set this matter in the clearest light I can, I would shew what were the measures or limitations of this grace or salvation provided for fallen man.

1. This grace or salvation did not extend so far as to abolish or destroy the general terms, commands or sanctions of the law of innocence, or the law of works, as it is called, under which *Adam* the first man was constituted †. This general law is a law of nature and creation: It is founded in the very nature of things, and the relation between God and a creature, which requires all the creatures of God to yield perfect obedience to the whole will of their maker, whether manifested by reason or revelation: And the penalty of this law abides still in force, in that it threatens the curse, or “death to every one that continues not in all things contained in this law,” *Gal. iii. 10.* and “the judgment of God, or the *Sinai*,” the righteous sentence of the law, is, “That they who commit such things are worthy of death,” *Rom. i. 32.* “The wages, or reward, of sin is death.” *Rom. vi. 23.*

This death in general implies a forfeiture of life and being, and all the blessings of it, both in soul and body, as far as God is pleased to resume them, as I have shewn under questions IX. and XI.

2. As the law with it's penalty, which threatens death to disobedience, is not abrogated, so the promise of eternal life to perfect obedience, which was superadded to the law, and turned it into a covenant, was not formerly abrogated or abolished; though indeed it became unable to procure eternal life for any son or daughter of *Adam*, because they all were sinners: And there are some scriptures which seem to shew that this promise and covenant stand still in force, *Gal. iii. 12.* “The man that doth them shall live in them,” *Rom. ii. 7.* “To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, the law promises eternal life.” *Rom. viii. 3.* “What the law could not do, in that it was weak through

\* See volume III. page 735.

† I say, the covenant of grace does not abolish the law of works, in the general terms of it, viz. “He that sins shall die;” though indeed the particular prohibition of “eating of the tree of knowledge” grows useless entirely upon *Adam's* expulsion from the garden, and his everlasting absence from all the fruit there, which was no more in his power to eat.

through the flesh," &c. Observe, it was not weak in itself to give life; the law still remained capable of giving life to any man who could produce and shew a perfect obedience to it: But "it is weak only through the flesh," or the sinfulness of human nature and our impotence to fulfil the conditions of it.

3. Neither did this grace and salvation of *Christ* extend so far as to provide an immediate and present release of fallen mankind, nor of any part of them, from all that sin and misery which the disobedience of *Adam* had introduced into the world. The very representation of those scenes of iniquity and mischief, sorrow and death, which attend all mankind, and which have been before exhibited, is a sufficient proof of the continuance and power of original sin all over the world, and the dreadful effects and punishments of it; and shews that mankind in general is not released from it, nor is any part of them immediately and totally delivered.

If therefore some of our divines, when they been expounding the fifth chapter to the *Romans*, have been heard to say, that the obedience, the atonement and death of *Christ* have put an end to the effects of the sin of *Adam*, and brought in as extensive a blessing as *Adam* did a curse, they must not be supposed to mean that original sin, with all the sinful, painful and mortal effects of it in men, women and children, is as entirely done away as though they had never been, or as though *Adam* had not sinned: For this is contrary to the witness of our senses, and the observation of our minds, every day of our lives.

4. Nor did this grace of God provide an absolute, certain and effectual salvation for all mankind from the penalties and effects of the broken law of innocence, for it is evident enough that all men will not be saved. But lest this method of grace should be utterly ineffectual to all men, the blessed God, who saw the universal degeneracy and corrupt principles of mankind, would not leave it to such an uncertainty, whether any men should be finally saved or no. It was not fit so glorious a provision for our salvation should be left in so doubtful a manner. And it is highly reasonable to think, that God foresaw, no man would repent and accept of this grace, if they were all entirely left to their own choice and their own follies.

Therefore he resolved a number should effectually accept of it.

Now had it been possible that such a number could be secured in an indefinite manner, without appointing and naming every particular person, perhaps God might have left it in such an indefinite manner. But since that could not be done, therefore he saw it necessary to provide an effectual security for some certain and determined persons, which in scripture are called the "sheep of *Christ*, whom he must bring into his fold, and they shall hear his voice; the children given him, his church, the elect of God, chosen before the foundation of the world; those who were given to *Christ* by the Father, those whose names were written in the lamb's book of life; those which were predestinated or ordained to eternal life, who were redeemed from the earth, chosen to be holy," &c. *John*. x. 11, 14, 16. *Rom*. viii. 33. *Eph*. i. 4. *John* x. 29. *Rom*. viii. 30. *Heb*. ii. 14. *Acts* xiii. 48. and many other places, as *Rev*. xiv. 3, 4. and chapter v. 9.

And I cannot but make this observation in my reading of the new testament, that though there are some scriptures which seem favourable to both sides of the question about the "election of persons," yet the texts which support this doctrine are more in number, and more plain, and express, and unanswerable, than those others which



which may seem to oppose this particular election of persons unto faith, holiness and salvation\*.

5. And even these very persons for whom salvation was thus certainly and effectually provided, were not to be rescued in this world from all the miseries of the fall, but only from some of them: They were secured first from those evils which were most dreadful, and delivered from others by degrees.

The effects of the fall or sin of man, under which these favourites or elect of God continue, are such as these, viz. God suffers them to come into the world with a sinful nature, uncured, unsanctified, and to continue under some evil operations and influences of this sinful nature all their lives, that they might conflict with it, and overcome it by his assistances: He appoints them also to continue during all this mortal life, subject to many pains, afflictions, sorrows, miseries, for wise ends and purposes, in his oeconomy of grace; and at last, that their bodies should die, and turn to dust, according to the original threatening of death.

The deliverance or salvation which God provided for them, was, that they should be restored to the favour and image of God again, and brought at last to eternal life and happiness in this manner, viz. that they should have a most lively sense or perception of their own guilt and misery, and of the hope of mercy, so far as to encourage their repentance for past sins, and their return to God by new obedience: And so far as the gospel of *Christ* came within their notice, they should learn the saving methods of grace by *Christ Jesus*: And to this end, all these things should be set before their minds by divine impressions on their understanding, as well as by the word; this is called enlightening their minds in the knowledge of their sin and misery; and of the way of salvation by *Christ*. And yet further, that they should have their sinful natures in some measure sanctified or made holy here on earth, by a great change wrought upon them by God's holy Spirit, which is called regeneration, or being born again; that they should be enabled by the Spirit of God to comply with all the proposals or necessary terms of this covenant of grace or salvation, which should be appointed them by God himself as governor of the world, or by *Jesus Christ* his Son, as his great vicegerent, and Lord of all: That their sins should be pardoned, both original and actual, so far as never to be shut out of the favour of God, and the promise of eternal life on the account of them; yet that they should sustain such sorrows and sufferings in their way to eternal happiness, as might teach them the evil nature and the bitter fruits of sin, and by degrees wean them from it: That they should have many assistances, reliefs and comforts, under the difficulties and trials, sorrows and miseries, which they should sustain in this life: That their souls should be received into a holy and peaceful state, in the presence of *Christ* in heaven, at the death of their bodies: And that their bodies

\* I desire the friendly reader to observe, that I am not here discussing the controversy about the proof of "particular election," &c. That has been done to much better purpose, and the doctrine itself effectually proved by many considerable writers, such as Mr. *Calvin*, archbishop *Usher*, doctor *Owen*, doctor *Goodwin*, and others, among whom I name Mr. *Baxter* himself. But I am only endeavouring to try, whether I cannot represent a plain and defensible scheme, wherein this doctrine will fit easy on the minds of men, without straining or torturing any text of Scripture, and without pronouncing damnation on all the rest of mankind, by a certain and unavoidable sentence of death, for want of a Saviour.

If it be enquired, why the all-wise and blessed God should suffer mankind to revolt from him at first by an universal apostasy, and why he should secure the recovery of so few out of all mankind from their state of sin and misery; there are some reasonable solutions given to this difficulty, by the writer of the "strength and weakness of human reason," in the fourth conference. See volume II. pages 395—316.

bodies should be raised again at the last day, and be rejoined to their souls, at which time they should be publicly acquitted, and acknowledged as the sons of God, and be freed from all the unhappy effects and penalties of the fall of *Adam*, and be thenceforth made for ever happy in the presence of God. It would be too tedious to cite all the scriptures which prove this; for they are scattered up and down every where in the new testament.

6. It seems also to be agreeable to the laws of nature and creation, that young children or infants, who are utterly incapable of knowing either the laws of God, or the discoveries and proposals of his mercy, and of complying with either of them in their own persons, should be esteemed as a part of their parents, or as one with their parents, as to all the purposes of this dispensation of grace, and the blessings which flow from it; and therefore God is called, "The God of *Abraham*, and the God of his seed," in their successive generations, *Gen.* xvii. 7, 8. Therefore the gentiles, when converted to God, are said to be "the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their off-spring with them," *I/a.* lxxv. 23. I do not stand now to give any longer proof of this matter, which has been so much controverted; but only add, it is not at all strange that God should make his covenant of grace so favourable and extensive to those children of pious persons, who never live to be capable of knowing or transacting these sacred affairs for themselves, since he has evidently so constituted it, in a great measure, in the kingdom of nature, and in the kingdom of providence; for in these it is evident, that children often inherit the gout or the stone, a healthy and robust constitution, or sickness and pain, poverty or riches, disgrace or honour, according to the condition and circumstances of their parents. And since it was so constituted in the law of innocency, or the covenant of works, whereby all the children of men should have been established in happiness, if *Adam* their father had continued in his obedience, and whereby all the posterity of *Adam* are now born in sin and misery, and involved in his fall, when he became a rebel against his maker; why may we not reasonably suppose, the mercy of God would extend as far as his justice? And why may not the happiness of the new covenant of grace be conveyed to the infant-off-spring of those who have accepted it, which die in their infancy, and can have no state of trial in their own persons?

7. Since the Son of God, *Jesus Christ*, was so very glorious a person in his own nature, one who "was with God, and was God, one who had all the fulness of the godhead dwelling in him bodily," there was such an abounding merit in his perfect obedience to the law of God for four and thirty years together, his voluntary submission to so many sorrows and sufferings in his life, and afterwards his enduring death itself, which was the express penalty threatened for sin? I say, there was such a superabundant value and merit in these undertakings, arising from the dignity of his person and character, that these labours, and these sufferings, did not only procure absolute and certain salvation for the elect, according to the will and appointment of the Father, but they may justly be called sufficient in their own nature, to have obtained actual salvation for all mankind.

And though God did not think fit to appoint all mankind to be certainly and effectually saved thereby, yet this redundancy of the merit of *Christ*, this overflowing influence of his great undertaking, his obedience and his death, might be actually appointed and accepted by God the Father, to obtain the following benefits for men; and as far as common benefits reach, *Christ* may be said "to die for



for all, or to taste death for every man," in the language of scripture \*.  
2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Heb. ii. 9.

I. We may suppose it is owing to the exuberant merits of *Christ*, that this earth continues to be the habitation for mankind, and that the life of *Adam* and *Eve* were preserved some hundreds of years after the day in which they first sinned, since the express word of threatening consigned them over to death immediately, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die." Gen. ii. 17.

It is true, such a reprieve as this was necessary in order to the peopling of the world, and the propagation of mankind in their successive generations; for had *Adam* and *Eve* died in the day when they sinned, the human nature would have been at an end, and have perished from this earth for ever: But it is most probably owing to the scheme of mercy, and the new covenant built upon the merit of *Christ*, that *Adam* and *Eve* were not destroyed that very day, and that God permitted a race of men to cover the face of the earth. So that every son and daughter of *Adam*, who is born into this world, is some proof that the extensive merit of the death of *Christ* reaches to them for some purposes.

II. It is owing to the superabundant merit of the obedience and sufferings of *Christ*, that the earth is appointed still and ordered to produce such a variety of supports and comforts for mankind in their successive generations, and that all the vegetable and animal powers on this earth, are not universally blasted by the curse: All the blessings of nature and providence that spring up from the earth, that descend from the heavens, that are brought forth or dispersed by the sun and the moon and the clouds, that are enjoyed and tasted by the sons and daughters of men in this world, are probably derived from this fountain of the blood of *Christ*; and in this sense perhaps, he may be said to taste death for every man.

And let it be observed, that these blessings reach to whole nations where we have but little reason to believe God has any chosen favourites, any of his own beloved children, any that are actually regenerated, adopted and sanctified to himself by special grace. Yet methinks every thing round about us seems to speak, that God has not utterly and absolutely abandoned all mankind to certain and necessary guilt and misery, besides the few whom he has chosen and secured to be certain subjects of his Son's kingdom: Every divine monument and instance of bounty and blessing round about us, seems to teach us that God is upon terms of grace and reconciliation with all the rebel race of his creature man.

III. That mankind have the common faculties of nature continued to them, is to be ascribed to the undertaking of *Christ*: That they have the use of their senses and their

\* Though there must be a very good sense in which *Christ* may be said to "die for all men," because scripture uses this language, 2 Cor. v. 15. yet it does not follow that the doctrine of universal redemption is found there; I cannot find that scripture once asserts, that "*Christ* redeemed all men, or died to redeem them all." In the new testament, however the word ἀγοράζω, "to buy," may possibly be used and applied in a large sense, yet ἐξαγοράζω, "to redeem, or λύτρωω," I think, is never applied particularly to any but the *Israel* of God, or to those who do or shall actually receive the gospel, and partake of the salvation of *Christ*, as the purchase of his blood. None but those are plainly and expressly said to be redeemed by *Christ*, in any text of the new testament that I can find. ἤγορασεν; "he bought, or paid a sufficient price for, those who fell into damnable errors and heresies," 2 Pet. ii. 1. But it is never said, he redeemed them. He bought them as a part of those "all things" whose dominion he obtained by his sufferings, Phil. ii. 9, 10. but not as his own people.

their limbs in any measures of health, ease, vigour, and activity; for these were all forfeited by sin, and included in the word death. All this is owing probably to *Christ*. And that they have any exercise of reason, that they have any measures of wisdom or prudence amongst them in the conduct of their affairs, may be ascribed also to the same spring, and perhaps this was designed in that text, *John* i. 4, 9. wherein we are told that "the word was the light, and life of men, and he was that light that lighteth every man who cometh into this world."

IV. That there are any sparks of natural virtue, any remains of benevolence, goodness or compassion towards one another in the hearts of men, is probably the fruit of the mediation of *Christ*: That there are any social virtues among them, that there is any conscience of probity, equity and justice, that mankind relieves and helps one another, that there is any such thing as government among men, and that all the sons and daughters of *Adam*, in all nations, are not mere savages, are not like wolves and bears to each other; and in short, that this earth is not a mere wilderness, or a hell of mischief and misery, is owing to restraining grace, and the redundant merit of the sufferings and death of *Christ*; or at least it may probably be so, nor can we give a better account of it.

V. That all mankind have had a gospel revealed to them, or a covenant of grace proposed to their acceptance, at first, in and by *Adam* their father, and conveyed by way of tradition to his posterity; surely this must be acknowledged to proceed from the generous undertaking of *Christ*. I speak here concerning those who are not elected, as well as those who are; for it has been designedly manifested to those who refuse, as well as those who accept. It seems to me to be owing to the overflowing merit of *Christ*, that all mankind are not buried in the same gross and brutal ignorance of God, and of themselves, as the darkest and vilest corners of the world are.

It is owing probably to this spring, that all mankind ever had pardon, grace and salvation proposed to them in the first promise made to *Adam*, in the covenant made to *Noah*, and in the gospel or hope of salvation, which he, who was a preacher of righteousness, doubtless communicated to his posterity, that is, to all the world.

It is owing to the same grace and purchase of *Christ*, that ever this promise should be again repeated to *Abraham*, and in some sense to all the nations of the earth by him; for in him "all the nations of the earth are blessed." *Gen.* xxii. 18. It is an effect of the merit of *Christ*, that ever there should be so many further discoveries of grace to the *jewish* nation, even to the profane as well as to the pious among them, and that not only by *Moses* and the prophets, but by *Christ* himself; and that ever this gospel should be published to the nations of the world, in the brightest edition of it, by the apostles of *Christ*, and the glad tidings of salvation proclaimed to the heathens, who "sat in thick darkness, and lay under the shadow of death," and even to those among them who never accepted it.

It is owing to this redundancy of merit in his death, than so many whole nations are called to repent, and to trust in the mercy of a God through a Saviour; even the non-elected, as well as those that are elected: And that to this day, the gospel should be continued to the nations who have so many years and ages abused it; that the ministry of the word should call whole kingdoms to be reconciled to God by a mediator, to trust in the merit of *Christ*, to receive *Jesus*, as their



Saviour and their Lord, to accept of pardon of sin and eternal happiness, upon the terms which the gospel reveals.

VI. It is probably owing to the same undertaking of *Christ*, and the overflowing value of his righteousness and death, that there are so many means of grace and divine assistances, both outward and inward, afforded to whole nations where the gospel comes; that even those who are not elected, have so many awakening providences, so many peculiar opportunities of mercy, so many excellent sermons preached to them, so many suitable words spoken both from the law and the gospel, as it were to their own souls. It is surely from this mediation of *Christ*, that they have their consciences at any time impressed with divine things, and excited to reprove them for sin, and to seek after salvation; that they have so many common workings of the holy Spirit, and his blessed influences upon their hearts, to make them bethink themselves about their eternal concerns, to give them some knowledge of *Christ* the Saviour, and to stir them up to the duties of faith and repentance, and new obedience; and that they are not only exhorted outwardly by the word, but inwardly by some common and general operations of the holy Spirit, to receive this salvation. Could all these blessings be really bestowed upon sinful men by the faithful and merciful God, if the original, and eternal, and only design of them were merely to render them so much the more heinously criminal, and the more extremely miserable, without any possibility of hope or recovery ever included in these blessings, or intimated by them?

VII. In the last place, it is owing to the most redundant merit of *Christ* our Lord, that such a conditional pardon and salvation, or such conditional propositions of peace as the gospel expresses, were ever provided for them who were not elected; these are set forth in such general proposals and offers as we read in the bible: "Whosoever believeth shall be saved: Whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely: Ho, every one that thirsteth, &c. Look unto me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth, &c." If there were no such blessing provided for them, so much as in a conditional manner, surely it could never be really and actually, and expressly offered to them. Surely the righteous, the gracious, and the holy God does not tantalize his perishing and miserable creatures, nor send his gospel and his ministers to offer them a mere nullity instead of a benefit? *Christ* does not call them in his gospel to receive an empty nothing, when his words propose to them a solid blessing. He does not invite them to trust in a Saviour for something which this Saviour was never entrusted with to be bestowed upon them, even if they did repent; or to hope in him for a verbal salvation which has nothing real in it; that is, for a mere word or name without a meaning, or a promise without a blessing in it. But because this is a question of great importance, I shall treat it more distinctly.

Q U E S T I O N XIII.

*How far has the glorious undertaking of our Lord Jesus Christ provided any hope of salvation for those who were not eternally chosen, and given into the hands of Christ, to be redeemed and saved?*

THE enquiry here is not, whether any of them who are not originally chosen of God, shall be finally saved. The event, though it be known to God, yet it is left to be determined by their own choice or refusal of this salvation. God himself has put no effectual and unsurmountable bar, or rather no bar at all, in their way, to prevent their acceptance of his grace. His chusing other persons who were fellow-sinners, to make them certain partakers of this grace, is no hinderance to those who were not chosen, from accepting the same. It is my opinion that there is such a thing as a general sufficiency of pardon, grace and happiness, provided for all mankind by *Jesus Christ*: And it is left to their own natural powers, under common helps, to accept or refuse it. That there is such a conditional salvation, and such real offers of eternal life procured by the overflowing merit of *Christ*, I think may be proved by these following considerations.

Consideration I. It is very hard to vindicate the sincerity of the blessed God, or his Son, in their universal offers of grace and salvation to men, and their sending ministers with such messages and invitations to accept of mercy, if there be not such a conditional pardon and salvation provided for them.

It is granted, that the ministers who are sent to preach this gospel, and offer this grace of salvation to the non-elect, may be very sincere in their ministry, for they know not whom God has chosen, and for whom he has provided this special grace; and therefore they offer it to all persons, according to their general commission, *Mark xvi. 15.* "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," &c. But how can God, or *Christ*, be sincere in sending their ministers with this commission, to offer this grace to all men, if they know that God has never provided such grace or salvation for any but the elect, no, not so much as conditionally?

It is hard to suppose that the great God, who is truth itself, and sincere and faithful in all his dealings, should call upon dying men to trust in a Saviour for eternal life, when this Saviour has not eternal life entrusted with him to give them, if they do repent: It is hard to conceive how the great governor of the world can be sincere in inviting and requiring sinners who are on the brink of hell, to cast themselves upon an empty word of invitation, a mere shadow and appearance of support, if there be nothing real to bear them up from those deeps of destruction, nothing but mere words and empty invitations. Can we think that the righteous and holy God would encourage his ministers to call them to lean and rest the weight of their immortal concerns and happiness upon a gospel, a covenant of grace, a mediator, and his merit and righteousness, &c. all which are a mere nothing with regard to them, a heap of empty names, an unsupporting void which cannot uphold them? When our blessed redeemer charges the *jews* with aggravated guilt for refusing his grace, can we suppose he had no such grace in his hand to offer them?



Or when he, as it were, consigns them over to death, because, says he, "ye will not come unto me that ye may have life," *John* v. 40. can we suppose he has no eternal life, not so much as a conditional grant of it in his hands for them?

By the way, I cannot but take notice here, that in order to avoid these hard and absurd consequences of the "calls of grace and offers of salvation where none is really provided," some persons chuse rather roundly to assert, there are no "calls of grace, no offers of pardon or salvation at all in the word of God, to any but to the elect:" And I think of the two it is the more defensible or consistent doctrine, though it seems to run counter to a great many plain scriptures in the old testament and the new; for there are many texts wherein pardon and salvation are proposed to all sinners whatsoever, without any regard whether they are chosen of God or no: And it is the design and voice of the whole current of scripture, to call sinners to repentance by promises of mercy, and to inforce that which *Isaiab* speaks, chapter lv. 6, 7. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found: Call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." And what our Lord himself pronounces in his personal ministry has the same design, when he calls to all the sinners in *Galilee*, "repent and believe the gospel, for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." *Mark* ii. 17. And *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*, his two chief messengers or apostles, call all the crucifiers of *Christ* in general, and the heathen nations, to "repent and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out; and to believe in the name of the Lord *Jesus*, that they may be saved," *Acts* iii. 19. and xiii. 38. and xvii. 30. "He commands all men every where to repent." *Rom.* x. 11, 13. while our Saviour most expressly informs us, *Matt.* xxii. 14. that "many are called, but few are chosen." Yet, I think, we must cancel all these scriptures, and deny all offers of grace and salvation made to sinners in general if *Christ* procured and provided nothing for them; or we must grant that there is a conditional salvation provided for all mankind, in order to justify the sincerity of God and his Son in the public call and general invitation given to sinners to repent and accept of this salvation.

Consideration II. It is very hard to defend the sincerity of the Spirit of God, in awakening the consciences of these persons sometimes, who are not elected, and stirring them up to think of receiving the salvation of *Christ* upon the terms of the gospel, if there be no such salvation conditionally provided for them to receive: It is hard to suppose that God should send his own Spirit to excite the consciences of such sinners in any common degrees to any repentings for sin, even in the most legal sense, and to bring them near to the kingdom of heaven, in the beginnings of conviction and sorrow, if there was no pardon provided in any sense for those who are not chosen, whether they repent or no; or that the Spirit should give them any, even the weakest excitations, to trust in the merit of a Saviour, if that merit has obtained no blessing for them, not so much as conditional.

Shall it be ever said, that God the Father, and his Son and Spirit have each done their parts to encourage and excite non-elect sinners to trust in the gospel for salvation, or the least grace or salvation in a conditional sense provided for them to trust in or to accept of?

Consideration III. It is equally difficult to vindicate the equity of God, as the judge of all men, in condemning unbelievers, and punishing them eternally for not accepting

accepting the offers of pardon, if there was not so much as a conditional pardon provided for them; and for not resting upon the merit of *Christ*, and receiving his salvation, when there was no such merit appointed for them to rest upon, nor any such salvation for them to receive. Surely it will appear in the day of judgment, that the final condemnation of sinners, and their eternal misery, was merely the fruit of their own negligence and disobedience to the voice of the gospel, and refusing the offered grace, and not to any real want of sufficient provision made for them by him who calls them to receive it. The language of *Christ*, in his ministry to sinners, is, "Come to this feast of the gospel, for all things are ready," *Matth.* xxii. 4. "This is the condemnation, that when light came into the world, they loved darkness rather than light," *John* iii. 18, 19. Men are expressly condemned "because they would not believe in *Christ*, nor come unto him that they might have life:" chapter v. 40. and therefore "they die in their sins," as the apostle *John* often represents, chapter viii. 21, 24. Surely the Lord *Jesus* would never be sent "in flaming fire to render vengeance on them that obey not the gospel," *2 Thess.* i. 8, 9. in the commands of it, nor receive this salvation, if there was no sufficient salvation provided in that gospel which commands them to receive it.

It will render this consideration much more forcible, when we observe, that there is a much severer condemnation and more dreadful punishment threatened to those who have heard of this grace and never laid hold of it, in proportion to the degree of light in which this grace was set before them. It is said, "It shall be less tolerable for the cities which refused to receive the gospel that *Christ* preached, than for *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* in the day of judgment;" *Matth.* xi. 22, 24. and they that despise the gospel of *Christ*, "of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall they be thought worthy, than those who despised the law of *Moses*?" *Heb.* x. 28, 29. So that their enjoying the proposals of this grace and this gospel, makes their case much worse than if they had never enjoyed it; and can we think that the righteous judge of the world will merely send words of grace and salvation amongst them, on purpose to make his creatures so much the more miserable, when there is no real grace or salvation contained in those words, for them who refuse to receive it? It is very hard indeed to vindicate the righteousness of the sentence of their double condemnation and punishment, for the refusal of pardon and salvation, if there was not so much as a conditional pardon, and a conditional salvation provided for them.

Consideration IV. It is very hard to suppose, that when the word of God, by the general commands, promises, threatenings, given to all men whatsoever, and often repeated therein, represents mankind as in a state of probation\*, and in the way towards eternal rewards or eternal punishments, according to their behaviour in this life: I say, it is hard to suppose all this should be no real and just representation, but a mere amusement: That all these proposals of mercy, and displays of the gracious dealings of God, should be an empty shew with regard to all the millions of mankind, besides the few that are chosen to happiness; and that they should really be

\* I know it has been the opinion of some persons, that this life is not properly called a state of probation or trial of men for eternity, because the final event is not uncertain, since it is known to God already, and partly determined by him: And yet these very persons will say, that a season of affliction or temptation is a season of trial to the people of God; for so it is often called in scripture, *2 Cor.* viii. 2. *Heb.* xi. 36. and *1 Pet.* iv. 12. and *1 Pet.* i. 7. it is called, "The trial of our faith," &c. Now I would fain know, whether the event of every season of trial of every kind of men, whether of saints or sinners, be not known to God, and in this sense it is not uncertain; and yet scripture, with much propriety, calls the one a season of trial; and I see no reason to exclude the other from the same name, especially since the sacred writers use it for wicked men also. *Rev.* iii. 10. "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, or trial, which shall come upon all the world, to try them which dwell upon the earth."



be so fixed in a wretched, hopeless, and deplorable state under the first sin of the first man, that they are utterly irrecoverable from the ruins of it; and that even as unalterably so as devils are, without any hope of recovery from their state of guilt and misery, for whom there was no Saviour provided, and whom God has not treated in this way of precept, promise and threatening. Is there not a plain difference made in scripture, between the "angels who sinned, whom God spared not, but cast them down from heaven into chains of darkness, and mankind who sinned," to whom God gives time and space for repentance, means of grace, offers of pardon, conditional promises of salvation, with a command to all men to accept it? What can manifest the blessed God to be upon terms of mercy with them, if this does not?

Consideration V. This seems to be a fair and easy way to answer several of those texts of scripture, which represent God as the "Saviour of all men, especially of them who believe," 1 Tim. iv. 10. and assert, that "God calls and commands all men every where to repent," Acts xvii. 30. That "*Christ* tasted death for every man," Heb. ii. 9. That "he gave himself a ransom for all men, to be testified in due time," 1 Tim. ii. 6. That "he died for all," 2 Cor. v. 15. That "he gave himself to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world," 1 John ii. 2. and "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," chapter iv. 14. and that "God so loved the world of mankind, that he sent his Son, not to condemn the world, but that through him the world might be saved; and that whosoever believes in his Son *Jesus*, should not perish, but should have eternal life." John iii. 16, 17.

I grant indeed, that many of these scriptures may have a pretty sufficient answer given to them by the art of criticism, even upon the supposition that salvation is provided only for the elect; but there are some few of those scriptures, and of their parallel places, which can never be so well explained, but by supposing the death of *Christ* has such an all-sufficient and overflowing merit in it, as to provide a sufficient conditional pardon, and conditional salvation for the non-elect, while it also provides absolute, effectual and certain pardon and salvation for those whom God has elected.

It seems evident to me from several texts of the word of God, that *Christ* did not die with an equal design for all men; but that there is a special number whom the Father chose and gave to the Son, whose salvation is absolutely secured by the death and intercession of *Christ*, John xvii. 6, 9, 10. but why should this hinder our interpretation of some other texts in a more general and catholic sense, where the love of God and *Christ* to mankind, are expressed in more universal phrases and terms? Why should we affect to limit that grace which is expressed in an unlimited form of speech? Why may we not suppose conditional pardon and conditional salvation, and the offers of the gospel, and the means of grace which are necessary to it, to be the purchase of the death of *Christ*, since the death of so glorious a person has such an exuberant value in it, and such all-sufficient merit; and especially since it is allowed to superabound so far as to purchase the continuance of the world, and common blessings of life for mankind?

Here let it be observed, that when the remonstrants assert that *Christ* died for all mankind, merely to purchase conditional salvation for them, and when those \* who profess

\* I say, "those who profess to be the strictest calvinists;" not that they do really come nearest to *Calvin's* sentiments and language; for *Calvin* himself has frequently intimated in his comments on scripture, that *Christ* did in some sense die for all men. See the end of this fifth consideration, pages 287, 288.

profess to be the strictest calvinists assert *Christ* died only and merely to procure absolute and effectual pardon and salvation for the elect, it is not because the whole scripture every where expressly or plainly reveals or asserts the particular sentiments of either of these sects, with an exclusion of the other; but the reason of these different assertions of men is this, that the holy writers, in different texts, pursuing different subjects, and speaking to different persons, sometimes seem to favour each of these two opinions \*, and men being at a loss to reconcile them by any medium, run into different extremes, and entirely follow one of these tracks of thought, and neglect the other.

But surely, if there can be a way found to reconcile these two doctrines of the absolute salvation of the elect, by the obedience, righteousness and death of *Christ* procuring it for them, with all things necessary to the possession of it, and also of the conditional salvation provided for all mankind, and offered to them in the gospel, through the all-sufficient and overflowing value of the obedience and sufferings of *Christ*; this will be the most fair, natural and easy way of reconciling these different texts of scripture, without any strain or torture put upon any of them.

Nor indeed can I conceive why the remonstrant should be uneasy to have pardon and salvation absolutely provided for the elect, since all the rest of mankind, especially such as hear the gospel, have the same conditional salvation which they contend for, sincerely proposed to their acceptance; nor can I see any reason why the strictest calvinist should be angry, that the all-sufficient merit of *Christ* should overflow so far in it's influence, as to provide conditional salvation for all mankind, since the elect of God have that certain and absolute salvation which they contend for, secured to them by the same merit; and especially since that great and admirable reformer, *John Calvin*, whose name they affect to wear, and to whose authority they pay so great a regard, has so plainly declared in his writings, that there is a sense in which *Christ* died for the sins of the whole world, or all mankind; and he sometimes goes so far as to call this the redemption of all. See his comments on the following scriptures †.

*Matth. xxvi. 8.* "This is my blood of the new testament, which was shed for many for the remission of sins. Sub multorum nomine non partem mundi tantum designat, sed totum humanum genus. Under the name of many, he signifies not a part of the world only, but all mankind."

*Rom. v. 18.* "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. Communem omnium gratiam facit quia omnibus exposita est, non quod ad omnes extendatur re ipsa: Nam etsi passus est Christus pro peccatis totius mundi, atque omnibus indifferenter Dei benignitate offertur, non tamen omnes apprehendunt. He makes this grace common to all, because it is set before all, though not really and in fact reached out to all. For though *Christ* suffered for the sins of the whole world, and he is offered indifferently to all by the bounty of God, yet all do not receive him."

*1 Cor. viii. 11, 12.* "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom *Christ* died?" On which *Calvin* remarks thus: If the soul of every weak person

\* This is a most evident truth, that scripture, in different parts of it, seems by it's expressions to favour each of these opinions; otherwise it could never be, that the writers of the different parties should each of them bring so many texts to support and vindicate their own sentiments, and which plainly give so much difficulty and perplexity to the writers of the opposite side to answer them.

† It may be proper to observe here, that some of the most rigid and narrow limitations of grace to men are found chiefly in his "institutions," which were written in his youth. But his comments on scripture were the labours of his riper years and maturer judgment.



person was the purchase of the blood of *Christ*, he that for the sake of a little meat, plunges his brother again into death who was redeemed by *Christ*, shews at how mean a rate he esteems the blood of *Christ*."

1 *John* ii. 2. "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world. Hic movetur quæstio, quomodo mundi totius peccata expientur? — aliqui dixerunt — Sufficenter pro toto mundo passum esse Christum, sed pro electis tantum efficaciter. Vulgo hæc solutio in scholis obtinuit: Ego quanquam verum esse illud dictum fateor, nego tamen præsentī loco quadrare. Here a question is raised, How can the sins of the whole world be expiated? Some have said, *Christ* suffered sufficiently for the whole world, but effectually for the elect alone. This is the common solution of the schools: And though I confess this is a truth, yet I do not think it agrees to this place."

2 *Pet.* ii. 1. "There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." "Tametsi variis modis abnegatur Christus, eum tamen hic, meo iudicio, attingit Petrus, qui exprimitur apud Judam: nempe, dum gratia Dei in lasciviam convertitur. Redemit enim nos Christus, ut populum haberet segregatum ab omnibus mundi inquinamentis, addictum sanctitati & innocentie. Qui igitur excusso freno, in omnem licentiam se projiciunt, non immerito dicuntur Christum abnegare, à quo redempti sunt. That is, though *Christ* is denied many ways, yet in my opinion *Peter* means the same thing here which *Jude* expresses, viz. that the grace of God is turned into wantonness: for *Christ* hath redeemed us, that he might have a people free from all the defilements of the world, and devoted to holiness and innocence: Whosoever therefore shake off the yoke, and throw themselves into all licentiousness, are justly said to deny *Christ*, by whom they were redeemed."

*Jude*, verse 4. "Turning the grace of our God into wantonness, and denying the only Lord God, and *Jesus Christ* our Lord. Christum verò abnegari intelligit, quum hi qui sanguine illius redempti fuerant, diabolo se rursus mancipantes, incomparabile illud pretium quantum in se irritum faciunt." The apostle here means that *Christ* is denied, when these who were redeemed with his blood, again enslave themselves to the devil, and, as far as in them lies, make that incomparable price vain and ineffectual.

Thus it appears, that *Calvin* himself thought that *Christ* and his salvation are offered to all, and that in some sense he died for all.

But I proceed to the last consideration.

Consideration VI. That all mankind have some conditional salvation provided for them, and some real grace and pardon offered to them by a new covenant, appears from this, that all men, both wicked and righteous, "or just and unjust, shall be raised from the dead, to give an account of things done in the body, whether good or evil," and to receive rewards or punishments in their body, as well as in their souls, according to their improvement or misimprovement of the dispensations under which they have lived. This seems to be the sense of several scriptures, *John* v. 28, 29. 2 *Cor.* v. 10. Now a resurrection is by no means provided by the law of innocency or the covenant of works: That only threatens death for sin, without the least hint or thought of the body's rising again. This doctrine of the resurrection therefore seems to be the effect of the overflowing merit of *Christ*, and perhaps that expression of the apostle may have some reference

reference to it. 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in *Adam* all die, so in *Christ* shall all be made alive: though I confess it may be also construed and confined only to the resurrection of the saints. But it is evident that *Jesus Christ* has this power to raise the dead, even sinners as well as saints, and "authority to judge all the world, given him of the Father as a mediator, or because he is the son of man.—And all that are in the graves—shall come forth; they who have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation:" *John* v. 25—29. They who have believed in *Christ*, and obeyed him, shall be raised up at last to happiness; but those who have disobeyed the gospel, shall be raised in order to be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." 2 *Thess.* i. 9.

Now surely this resurrection of all mankind must be built upon the foot of a new covenant given or offered to all mankind, since the old covenant of innocency, or the law of works, appoints eternal life without dying for the obedient, and death without a resurrection for the disobedient. Such a covenant therefore as admits natural death to seize even upon those who are obedient to it, and provides a resurrection even for those who are disobedient, must needs be a different covenant from the law of works, which admits no death for the one, nor provides any resurrection for the other.

There was therefore doubtless a general proclamation of pardon and salvation to all mankind, who were fallen in *Adam*, contained in the first promise, or the gospel that was preached to *Adam*, the first father of mankind, by God himself, in the garden after his fall: And this was again preached to all the world by *Noah*, the second father of mankind, and a preacher of righteousness; otherwise I think the resurrection would not reach to every man and woman in the world.

Let it be considered also, that this very resurrection of the bodies of sinful mankind, brings with it an additional penalty and misery, beyond what the law of innocency threatened, even the everlasting punishment of the new-raised body, and the soul as united to it: Now this cannot, with such evident justice, be inflicted upon the non-elect, if they are under no other covenant but that of innocency, or the law of works, because no such punishment is threatened or implied in that law, as far as I can read it.

Nor would there have been any such thing as sinners arising from the dead, that we can find in the bible, if *Christ Jesus* had not taken upon him to be a mediator between God and fallen man, so far as to set mankind upon some new foot of hope; and thus unbelievers and impenitent persons are punished in their new-raised bodies, for rejecting this hope. For since the broken law or covenant of works leaves the body under the power of death for ever, we can hardly suppose that the Son of God, the chief minister of his Father's grace, would provide a resurrection of the body for breakers of that original law, merely to put them to severer punishments and more intense torments, than that broken law threatened, if there were not some advantage in the nature of things, derived to them from his mediation, to balance it: Now what equal advantage is there to balance this severer punishment, if there be not some conditional hope of their recovery from the misery of their fallen state, upon supposition that they sincerely endeavour to perform all the duties of this new covenant, as far as the revelation of them comes within their notice; that is, that they repent of their sins, and trust in the divine grace and forgiveness, in order to their acceptance.

Our Lord *Jesus Christ*, the righteous and appointed judge, will never give occasion for any of all the miserable multitude to say, that they are condemned to an end-



less punishment in their new-raised bodies, for breaking God's original law of innocency, which punishment was never threatened in that law. He will never give them reason to complain, that, with regard to them, he came not to be a mediator or a Saviour, but merely to add to their misery, by a resurrection to eternal pain, without any equivalent of hope: Or that he came to expose them to double damnation for refusing his grace, when he had none for them to accept. The goodness and equity of God, and his Son, will never suffer such an imputation to fall upon any part of their transactions: And as they have both agreed in pronouncing these words, *John* iii. 17. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved \*; they will both agree also in such a conduct, as shall not so much as appear to run counter to such a solemn expression of grace, or to the common notions and rules of justice.

Since therefore it appears pretty evident, that *Jesus*, the righteous judge, will not condemn sinners for refusing that grace and that salvation, which had no reality in things, and which was never really offered to their acceptance, nor so much as provided; and since he will never punish sinners by the mere law or covenant of works, with the punishment of a resurrection of the body, which were never threatened nor included in that law or covenant; we must conclude, according to the representation of scripture, according to the rules of justice, and the reason of things, that there must be some other covenant, some covenant of grace and salvation, under which all men are situated, and which has really been offered to all mankind, either in clearer or in more obscure notices thereof; such a covenant, whereby the resurrection of the body to eternal happiness, is the appointed reward of those who receive this offered salvation; and whereby the resurrection of the body to eternal misery, is the appointed punishment of those who refuse to comply with the grace of that dispensation under which they are placed, and neglect to receive this salvation.

Thus I think I have proved it pretty clearly, at least to my own satisfaction, that the non-elect among men are not predestinated to eternal misery by any absolute act of reprobation, nor are they left in the state of fallen angels or devils, for whom there is no Saviour appointed, and who cannot have any reasonable hope; but that there is a conditional salvation provided for all men, and offered to them in the gospel, by the glorious all-sufficiency and redundancy of the merit of *Christ*.

The doctrine of reprobation, in the most severe and absolute sense of it, stands in such a direct contradiction to all our notions of kindness and love to others, in which the blessed God is set forth as our example, that our reason cannot tell how to receive it. Yet, if it were never so true, and never so plainly revealed in scripture, it would only be a doctrine which might require our humble assent, and our silent submission to it, with awful reverence of the majesty and sovereignty of the great God. But it is by no means a doctrine, in which we, as men, could or should rejoice and glory, or take pleasure in it; because it hath so dreadful an aspect on far the greatest part of our fellow-creatures, considered as mere creatures. Nor do I think the blessed God would require us so far to divest ourselves of humanity, as to take a secret satisfaction in the absolute and eternal appointment of such numbers

\* If the word "world" in the two or three first places, signifies "mankind" without distinction, why should the "world" in the last place signify only the elect? Is not a conditional or indefinite salvation here intimated to be provided for mankind, whether they be *jews* or *gentiles*.

bers of our kindred in flesh and blood, to everlasting perdition: Much less should we make this awful and terrible article a matter of our publick boast and triumph, even if we could prove it to be revealed, but rather mourn for it.

And since there are so many expressions of scripture, that give us reason to think that *Christ* lived and died in some respects as a common mediator of mankind, though with a peculiar regard to the elect, methinks this doctrine of the extensive goodness of God, is a much more desirable opinion, and should be more cheerfully received by us, as it is so agreeable to our duty of charity to all men, and seems so necessary to us at present, for vindicating the justice, goodness and sincerity of the blessed God, in his transactions with mankind.

When therefore I hear men talk of the doctrine of reprobation, with a special gust and relish, as a favourite article, I cannot but suspect their good temper, and question whether they love their neighbour as they do themselves. The case is very different, when saints are called in scripture to rejoice in the publick judgments of God, exercised upon the antichristian state, or upon the wicked oppressors, and incorrigible sinners of the world: for that is the effect of God's equity and righteousness, as a wise and faithful governor; but this would be an instance merely of his dreadful sovereignty and terror, and hardly consistent with goodness.

I would ask leave also in this place to enquire, what great advantages can be derived to religion or christianity, by endeavouring to limit the extent of the death of *Christ*, and to take away all manner of hopes, and prayers, and endeavours from the non-elect. Does the doctrine of election of persons obtain any further confirmation by it? No, by no means. Their salvation is secured, whatsoever becomes of the rest of mankind, whether they have any hopes or no. Does the goodness and special grace of God acquire any further honours by this limitation? No certainly. Divine grace is perfectly the same towards the elect, as though there were no other person in the world. Are the elect any way discouraged by it? Not in the least: But many persons who are awakened to a sense of sin, and are seeking after *Christ* for salvation, by this narrow doctrine may be terribly discouraged from receiving his offers of grace, when they are taught to doubt whether there be any grace provided for them, or whether *Jesus* be appointed to act as their Saviour. It may be a means to drive some poor souls to despair, when they hear, that unless they are elected, they may seek after salvation by *Christ* in vain, for there is none purchased for them, not so much as conditionally: And it may tempt them to begin at the wrong end, and seek to pry into the counsels of God, and enquire after what they can never know, that is, their election of God, before they dare trust in grace, or submit to the gospel of *Christ*.

Now if many inconveniences may arise from this limitation of the whole virtue of the blood of *Christ* only to the elect, and utterly secluding all the rest of mankind; and if no valuable end or advantage to religion can be obtained by this narrow opinion, what should make men so zealous to get the greatest part of the world excluded utterly from all hopes, and all salvation?

I know there have been many objections raised against this charitable opinion of the extent of *Christ's* death in books of controversy; but the two chief and most plausible are these, which I will endeavour chiefly to answer, and by these answers lead the way for solving the rest.

Objection I. But may it not be said here, if there be only an outward sufficiency of salvation provided for the non-elect, by a conditional pardon procured through



the death of *Christ* if they should repent and believe, but no inward sufficiency of grace provided to enlighten their minds, to change their hearts, and enable them to exercise this faith and repentance, the event will be infallibly and necessarily the same, and their damnation as necessary and certain, as if there were no outward salvation provided; since they of themselves cannot repent, they cannot believe; for by the fall all men are become blind in spiritual things, and dead in sin.

Answer. It is granted, that no sinner will truly and sincerely repent and believe in *Christ*, without the powerful and effectual influences of converting grace; and therefore they are called blind and dead in sin, because God knows the final event will be the same as if they were under a natural impossibility, or utter natural impotence. And for this reason the conversion of a sinner is called, a new creation; being born again; giving sight to the blind; or, a resurrection from the dead: And the necessity of divine power to effect this change, is held forth in many places of scripture.

Yet we must say still, that sinners are not under such a real natural impossibility of repenting and believing, as though they were naturally blind or dead. It is true, the blind and the dead have lost their natural powers of seeing and moving; but when scripture represents the inability of sinners to repent, or believe in *Christ*, by such figures and metaphors as death or blindness, it must be remembered these are but metaphors and figures, such as the holy writers, and all the eastern nations frequently use; and they must not be understood in their literal powers or faculties of understanding, will, and affections, which are the only natural powers necessary to believe and repent.

Now it is plain that these natural faculties, powers, or capacities, are not lost by the fall; for if they were, there would be no manner of need or use of any moral means or motives, such as commands, threatenings, promises, exhortations; these would all be impertinent and absurd, for they could have no more influence on sinners, than if we command or exhort a blind person to see, or a dead-body to rise or move; which commands and exhortations would appear ridiculous and useless. And since the blessed God, in his word, uses these moral means and motives to call sinners to repentance and faith, it is certain that they have natural powers and faculties sufficient to understand and practise these duties; and therefore they are not under a necessity of sinning, and of being destroyed, since there is nothing more wanted in a way of sufficient natural powers, faculties, or abilities, than what they have.

All the other impotence and inability therefore in sinners to repent or believe, properly speaking, is but moral, or seated chiefly in their wills. It is a great disinclination or aversion in these natural faculties, to attend to, learn, or practise the things of God and religion\*; and this holds them fast in their sinful state in a similar way, as if they were blind and dead, and I said the final event will be the same,

\* I grant this inability to repent has been sometimes called by our divines a natural impotence, because it arises from the original corruption of our nature since the fall of *Adam*; and in this sense I fully believe it. But this spring of it is much better signified and expressed by the name of native impotence, to shew that it comes from our birth; and the quality of this impotence is best called moral, being seated chiefly in the will and affections, and not in any want of natural powers or faculties to perform what God requires: And the reason is plain, viz. that no new natural powers are given by converting grace, but only a change of the moral bent or inclination of the soul, a happier turn given to our natural faculties by the sovereign grace of God and his Spirit.

same, that is, they will never repent without almighty grace. And upon this account that strong and settled inclination to sin, and aversion to God, which is in the will or affections, is represented in our own language, as well as in the eastern countries, by impotence or inability to forsake or subdue sin: As when a drunkard shall say, "I had such a strong desire to the liquor, that I could not but drink to excess, I could not with-hold the cup from my mouth:" Or when a murderer shall say, "I hated my neighbour so much, that having a fair opportunity, I could not help killing him:" Or when we say to a man of fury in his passion, "you are so warm at present, that you cannot see things in a true light, you cannot hearken to reason, you cannot judge aright, you are not capable of acting regularly." And that this is the manner of speaking in the eastern countries, is evident from the bible, *Gen. xxxvii. 4.* "Joseph's brethren hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him:" Yet you will grant all this is but moral impotence, that is, a very strong inclination to excess of drink, or murder, or passion, or a strong aversion to the contrary virtues. Even in the things of common life the "can-not" sometimes signifies nothing but the "will-not." *Luke xi. 7.* "Trouble me not, my door is shut, my children are with me in bed, I cannot rise to give thee;" that is, I will not. And with regard to faith, or believing in *Christ*, our Saviour explains his own language in this manner. In one place he saith, "No man can come unto me except my Father draw him," *John vi. 44.* And in another place he charges the *jews* with this as their fault: "Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life," *John v. 40.* So in the parable one excuse is, *Luke xiv. 20.* "I have married a wife, and—I cannot come." All these citations intend the same thing: Their "can-not" is their "will-not," that is, it is the strength of their aversion to *Christ*, which is a moral impotence or inability to believe in him, and the fault lies in the will.

St. Paul speaks to the same purpose, *Rom. viii. 7, 8.* where he shews, that it is the aversion or enmity of the carnal mind to God, which hinders it from obeying the law of God, and at last he says, it cannot be subject to it. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be: So then they who are in the flesh cannot please God." The fault still lies in the will of sinful man; and it is this makes it criminal, while it is not naturally impossible to be avoided or overcome.

And upon this account God is pleased to use moral means and motives, viz. promises, threatenings, commands, &c. toward all men, such as are suited to awaken their hearts, and excite and persuade their will to use all their natural abilities, to set their natural powers or faculties to work, to attend to, and learn, and practise faith and repentance; and it is by these very means God persuades his elect powerfully to repent and believe. But when persons will not hear, nor be influenced by these motives, because of their strong and wilful aversion to God and godliness, their crime is entirely their own, and their condemnation is just. They have natural powers or faculties in them, which, if well tried, might overcome their native propensity to vice, though they never will do it.

If the great God, in a way of sovereign mercy, gives some persons superior aids of grace to overcome this moral impotence, and conquer this aversion to God and goodness\*; if he effectually leads, inclines, or persuades them by his Spirit to re-

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\* Whether the Spirit of God effectually persuade the will to repent and believe in *Christ*, by immediate influence upon the will itself, or by setting the things of the gospel before the mind in so strong a light, and persuading the soul so to attend to them, as shall effectually influence the will, this shall not be



pent and believe in *Christ*, this does not at all hinder the others from exercising their natural powers of understanding, and will in believing and repenting.

Nor can any thing of their guilt and wilful impenitence be imputed to the blessed God, who is Lord of his own favours, and gives or with-holds where he pleases, and "who shall say to him, what dost thou?" Why should my eye be evil toward my neighbour, because the eye of God is good? Or what pretence have I to charge God with injustice, when he does more for me than he is bound to do, though he does more for my neighbour than he has done for me?

Let this then be constantly maintained, there is a natural, inward sufficiency of powers and faculties given to every sinner to hearken to the calls and offers of grace and the gospel, though they lie under a moral impotence; and there is an outward sufficiency of provision of pardon in the death of *Christ*, for every one who repents and accepts the gospel, though pardon is not actually procured for all men, nor secured to them. And thus much is sufficient to maintain the sincerity of God in his universal offers of grace through *Jesus Christ*, and his present commands to all men to repent and trust in his mercy; as well as to vindicate his equity in the last great day, when the impenitent and unbelievers shall be condemned. Their death lies at their own doors, for since there was both an outward and inward sufficiency for their recovery, the fault must lie in their own free-will, in their wilful aversion to God and *Christ*, and his salvation. I think this distinction of natural and moral power and impotence, will reconcile all the various expressions of scripture on this subject, both to one another, as well as to the reason of things, which can hardly be reconciled any other way.

Objection II. Suppose the non-elect are not debarred from this salvation, by the want of natural powers sufficient to receive and accept it, yet since the great God foresees this their aversion to repentance and holiness, and foreknows they will never accept the salvation of *Christ*, and that as certainly as if they had already renounced it; does not this future certainty of the event lay an effectual bar against their believing and accepting it? For if they should repent and accept, it would contradict the foreknowledge of God.

We enquire also further, can his offers of grace be sincere to persons whom he foresees will certainly reject it? What are these offers, but delusions of their hope, and appointed aggravations to increase their guilt; since God certainly knows these offers of grace will be abused only to sinful purposes?

Answer I. As for the first part of this enquiry, if we will give our selves leave to think impartially upon the case, we must agree, that the mere knowledge of any event, without any real influence from the power that knows, does not make the event necessary, whether it be foreknown or after-known. If I foreknow the sun will rise to-morrow, that has no more influence on the sun's rising than my after-knowledge that it rose yesterday.

Now the great God, among his unsearchable powers and perfections, has a knowledge of the agency of free causes, as we have of necessary causes: And as he has a full view of all concomitant circumstances, he hath a way to foresee events in their contingent causes, such as the free will of man is, as well as we have a way by reason to foresee many things in their

be any matter of my present debate or determination; for in both these the event and consequences are much the same: There is no new natural power or faculty given to the soul in order to faith and repentance, but a divine influence upon the old natural powers, giving them a new and better turn.

their necessary causes. It is certain he does foreknow the future contingent actions of men, even their wicked actions, because he has foretold a multitude of them in the bible; and it is granted, that from his foreknowledge of any future event, we may infer the consequential certainty of it, because his fore-knowledge cannot be deceived; yet this does not at all prove his antecedent determination of it by any decree, nor his influence upon it: Neither can we infer from God's mere foreknowledge, that there is any natural necessity of the event, since the causes are but contingent, such as man's free-will. The distinction between the certainty of a future event, with the consequent necessity of it, derived from God's foreknowledge, and the antecedent necessity of it, derived from the nature of things, or from God's actual pre-determination of it, sufficiently solves this difficulty. The first may be where the second is not.

Answer II. We have reason to believe, that the Gospel is never sent, nor the proposals of salvation made to any people, city, or nation, where God foresees there are none at all that will accept of it. Now in the way of God's government of this world, he deals with mankind as a number of free and moral agents, and publishes and offers sincerely his benefits to men in general, promiscuously to the elect and the non-elect: And while by these same proposals, means, and motives, he effectually and powerfully gathers his elect out of the world, he gives sufficient encouragement to all sinners to accept the same grace. God's secret foreknowledge of those who will not accept it, is by no means a sufficient reason to prevent or forbid the general offers of his grace to them, because the design of his government is to treat mankind as reasonable and moral agents.

Answer III. There may be valuable and unknown ends and purposes in the government of God, attained by his sincere forbidding sin to creatures, whom he knows resolved to practise it; and by his sincere commands of duty to creatures whom he knows resolved to neglect it; and that without any real injury or injustice done to the sinner. The wisdom, holiness and dignity of his government must be maintained in all the just appearances of it, though sinners will rebel against it; for the honour of divine government in the authority, wisdom and holiness of it, is of much more importance than the welfare of ten thousand of his creatures. "Let God be true, saith the scripture, though every man be a liar." *Rom. iii. 4.* Let God appear sincere and wise, glorious and holy, though every man should turn rebel. God may wisely and sincerely publish the doctrines of salvation with sufficient light and evidence about them, to those who he knows will not believe them: He may wisely and sincerely offer grace and salvation to those who he foresees will refuse it.

Would it be an act of folly or of injustice, or of untruth or insincerity, in a wise and good man, to give forth his commands to ten children, though by all present appearances, his great wisdom and sagacity foresees that seven of them will disobey him, and only three comply? Should he not approve himself to the world in doing what is wise and good, and in maintaining his parental character with honour, though some of his sons neglect their filial duty? Hereby also he gives his three obedient children an opportunity to shew their duty and love, though the other seven will take occasion thence to discover their rebellion. The great God, in his government of the world, conducts his unsearchable affairs by such general laws and rules, as is most for his honour; and neither his holiness nor his goodness make it necessary for him



him to change this his wise conduct, though he foresees many of his creatures will grow worse instead of better by it.

Answer IV. Whether or no we can guess at any of the reasons of God's government or conduct in this thing, yet the matter of fact is certain, and beyond all dispute. God has acted in this manner, and does act thus in many instances: He sent his gospel to the *jews* by his son *Jesus*, though he foreknew, and even foretold by his prophets, that the *jews* would reject the gospel, and murder the divine messenger. He gave his word of warning, his call to repentance and righteousness, to be preached by *Noah* to a wicked world, for one hundred and twenty years, though he foreknew that very few would be reformed by *Noah's* preaching; and he told *Noah*, that at the end of those years he would bring a flood over the world to destroy the wicked inhabitants of it, who would not be reformed. Again, when he put *Adam* and *Eve* into paradise under the law of innocence, and forbid them to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, we also believe he foreknew that *Adam* and *Eve* would eat this fruit, and disobey their creator; and yet he wisely forbid them to eat it. Now since we know that a just God hath in fact done these things, we must confess there cannot be the least injustice in them.

Nay, we may go a step farther in these matters of fact. God has actually sent his Son and his gospel with miracles and divine evidence, where he knew they would not be received, or at most by a very few, that is, to *Chorazin*, *Capernaum*, and *Bethsaida* in *Galilee*; and yet he never sent this gospel, with such evidence, to *Tyre* and *Sidon*, to *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, where *Christ* tells us, it would have been received, and the inhabitants "would have repented in sackcloth and ashes," *Matth.* xi. 21. we are sure there is nothing unjust in all this transaction, because we know God has done it, "who is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works," *Psal.* cxlv. 17.

Let us then content ourselves with knowing the things that make for our own peace, and humbly submit to the wise and gracious government of God, for our own eternal happiness, though we cannot enter into the impenetrable secrets of his counsel, nor solve all difficulties therein, because our short and narrow view of things cannot comprehend them: And yet, at the same time, if we can, by our reasonings according to scripture, cast any happy gleam of light into these darkneses of providence, whereby any honour may be done to God, any imputation of injustice taken off from his conduct, any scruples of mankind satisfied, and any angry contentions removed; it is neither unlawful nor improper to attempt and seek after such advantages: And with this view and hope I would propose the three following questions.

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Q U E S T I O N XIV.

Can the different opinions of christians, concerning the operations of divine grace on the souls of men, be reconciled?

THE corruption and degeneracy of mankind, by the fall of *Adam*, is generally and truly supposed by our protestant divines, to be so great and universal, and their weakness or impotence to change their own sinful natures into holiness, is so evident, both in the discourses of the sacred writers, and in the experience of men, that it is agreed among most or all of them, there is a necessity of some aids of divine grace towards our recovery; and that not only to provide, by proper outward means, such a salvation as may be answerable to the miseries we labour under, and to propose it outwardly and plainly in the gospel, but the best of us stand in need, in our fallen state, also of some further favour from heaven, some inward assistances and influences of the grace of God, and his Spirit, in order to restore us from the ruins of our fall by repentance, and to enable us to accept of the salvation which is procured by our Lord *Jesus Christ*, the mediator.

There have been some writers indeed, who profess christianity, who suppose nothing else is necessary, in order to the recovery of fallen man, where the gospel is preached, but the mere outward proposal of this gospel, and the representation of the readiness of God to pardon the sins of those that repent and believe, together with all the motives of hope and fear, &c. which are made use of in the bible, to awaken and excite sinners to return unto God. They imagine, that the providential disposal of the outward circumstances of men, by their enjoying the benefit of a pious education, or their sitting under a useful ministry, or the advantage of having good company frequently to converse with, and religious books brought in their way, with opportunity and leisure for reading, &c. are abundantly sufficient "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God," *Acts* xxvi. 18. to renew them unto holiness, and to make new creatures of them, fit for the business and blessedness of heaven. Now these kind providences are what they call "the grace of God," and the only grace they will allow to be necessary to our salvation.

This was the most common sentiment of the ancient *pelagians*\*, who gave so much trouble to the churches of *Christ* in early times, and which occasioned the

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labours

\* It is pity the professed disciples and followers of the religion of *Christ* should have been divided into so many different opinions, and thereby given occasion to distinguish them by so many different names, which are chiefly derived either from their several tenets, or some practice of their forefathers, or from some signal writers who espoused, defended or propagated those different sentiments. I could wish with all my soul that they were all of one opinion, and all confined only to the single name of christians, which was given them first at *Antioch*, to distinguish them from heathens, *jews* and infidels of every kind. But since there are such multitudes of different sentiments among them, and in writing controversies one cannot conveniently use a long periphrasis to describe each of them, sufficient to distinguish them from the rest, we are constrained to make use of those names by which they have either distinguished themselves, or the world hath distinguished them, such as *pelagians*, strict *calvinists*, *arminians* or *remonstrants*, and moderate *calvinists* or reconcilers.



labours of St. *Augustine* to be much employed in the refutation of their errors: Afterward they allowed some illumination of the understanding by divine grace.

But I fear those who embrace the old *pelagian* doctrines, have too little regard to the express language of scripture, and to it's most obvious sense, when it speaks so much about the power or grace of God, and the operations of the Spirit of God, in giving us a new heart, creating a clean heart in us, enlightening our minds, converting our souls, or turning us to God, and creating us a-new after the image of God, working in us both to will and to do, &c. whereby some inward and effectual operations of divine grace, upon the minds or hearts of men, are so plainly expressed, that even the remonstrants or *arminians* themselves, I think, in all their ranks and classes have supposed some such inward workings of the grace of God upon the heart; because so many plain texts of scripture could never be otherwise interpreted, without an unreasonable force put upon them. Yet I think it must be acknowledged, that these last named writers do expressly allow these inward operations of God, to go no farther than to render men salvable, and to leave the powers of men in a state of indifference, to convert and turn themselves to God, but not effectually to determine and secure their salvation; of which I shall speak more immediately.

Among those who admit of divine grace to operate inwardly on the minds and hearts of men, there have been several different opinions what this grace is, how far it reaches, and how much of it is necessary towards the recovery of man.

But before I represent these several opinions, I would lay down some general propositions, which I think may be assented to by most or all of them, and exhibit them as a medium of reconciliation to one another: And I shall rejoice, if I may be so far favoured of providence, as to convince them how their several different sentiments may all be tolerably reconciled to these general propositions, and thereby take away a great deal of that noisy controversy which has unhappily perplexed the church of *Christ* upon this subject.

Proposition I. God has provided a glorious salvation for fallen men by *Jesus Christ*, which is sufficient for all men in it's own nature, and shall be certainly effectual to all that are willing to accept of it upon his appointed terms, or in his own appointed way, that is, in a way of repentance for sin, renewal unto holiness, and faith or dependence on the mercy of God through *Jesus Christ*.

Proposition II. Since God has made so glorious a provision for the recovery of mankind, he will not leave it to mere chance and uncertainty, whether any person shall repent and accept of this offered salvation or no; lest, through the universal depravation and wretched obstinacy of men, his own gracious counsels for our salvation should be frustrated, and the important labours and sufferings of his Son be sustained to no saving purpose, and rendered almost useless to the world.

Propo-

But here let it be observed, that the most rigid *calvinists*, who pretend to carry the doctrines of divine grace to the greatest height of resistless and sovereign efficiency, and the *pelagians*, who generally reduce it to the lowest degree, that is, to mere favourable outward providences, are counted the two extremes in this controversy about divine grace: And between these two there are almost as many degrees and classes of different sentiments, as there are writers. Some of them approach a little nearer to the one side, and some to the other: And it is not fit that any persons should be comprehended under any of these names, but which they themselves allow or chuse, according as they come nearest to the opinions of this or the other party.

Proposition III. There is no way, which I can conceive of, how God should secure or ascertain the salvation of any in general, or make it sure even to his own fore-knowledge, unless it be some way or other ascertained, which particular persons shall accept of this grace and salvation.

Observe, I do not here go so far as to say, the salvation of those particular persons should be made necessary by any such absolute decree, or such irresistible influences as some have asserted; but it must some way or other be made certain to the foreknowledge of God, that such particular persons shall be saved; for if it be left at utter uncertainty as to every individual, how can it possibly be known that any individuals at all shall be finally partakers of it?

Proposition IV. God will magnify his grace in the salvation of all those who are saved in such a manner, that every one shall acknowledge his own salvation perfectly owing to the divine mercy; and that none shall have any cause or occasion to glory in himself, but shall confess to the glory of divine grace, that it is grace that is the supreme and the chief cause that has made him to differ from others. Without this there could not be a holy harmony and concert among all the saved number, in their songs of praise to God and their Saviour; "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy grace be all the glory:" Nor indeed could any tolerable interpretation be given to many scriptures, which humble the pride of man, by ascribing all to God.

Proposition V. How much soever the blessed God may design to manifest and magnify his free and sovereign grace towards sinful men, yet in every step of his procedure he will maintain such an invariable regard to his equity, as governor of the world, that he will never exercise his grace in such a manner as to take away the necessary regards and honours due to his governing justice. The great God has given man an understanding mind to distinguish between good and evil, and a freedom of will to chuse one or the other, and ordained him to be always, and in all circumstances, a proper subject of his moral government. And he has determined and resolved in righteousness to manifest himself at last as a judge, and "render to every one according to their works:" *Rom. ii. 6.* And therefore he will maintain this righteous design of his government, to make the eternal rewards and punishments of men to depend on what they themselves have freely chosen, whether it be good or evil: Nor will he ever do any thing inconsistent with this his glorious and universal design, as a righteous governor and judge of his intelligent creatures.

Proposition VI. Therefore when divine grace operates upon the minds or wills of men, in order to their conversion and salvation, it is generally done in such a soft, gentle and connatural manner, that does not put any violence upon the faculties of the soul: But for the most part, the grace of God, and his holy Spirit, seem to operate insensibly, as though our own faculties wrought this of themselves, and without any strong, certain, and evident notice, that it is the operation of any spirit superior to our own: And yet, by the blessed effects of our conversion and sanctification, compared with the records of scripture, we certainly infer it must be by virtue of some divine influence received from above, that the glory may be given unto God and his grace, as the supreme cause of our salvation.

Now if all the particular opinions of parties, about the methods and degrees of the exercise of this inward grace towards the salvation of men, may be pretty well



reconciled to these propositions, I do not see any sufficient occasion for such very noisy and angry contests as have been found in the christian church upon this subject; since they agree in these most necessary and most important things which relate to the honour of divine justice, and divine grace, as they are represented in scripture; though perhaps there may remain some particular texts and expressions of scripture, to which it may be hard to reconcile the contenders on either side.

However, since I think these propositions contain the most important sense and design of the revelations of scripture on this subject, and I am persuaded they may be solidly maintained and defended by scripture, and reason, and experience, I hope we shall be able to shew, that all the different schemes are consistent, in some measure, with these propositions.

Let us now recount the three chief sentiments of men under the several letters of the alphabet, A, C, and R, for the sake of better distinction.

C imagines mankind to be so entirely and universally corrupted by the fall, and impotent to all that is good, the mind to be so blind, the will so perverse, and the affections set upon carnal objects with such obstinacy, that there must be an immediate operation of God, by his grace, in a physical or supernatural manner, on all the several powers of our nature, to rectify them, and make them capable, willing and fit to be partakers of this salvation. He supposes there must be special, efficacious, and irresistible influences of the holy Spirit on the mind or understanding to enlighten it, to see and discern divine things in their beauty and excellency, which they can never see without this sovereign influence; there must be an immediate, effectual, and irresistible operation \* on the will and affections, to give them a new bent or bias, and an effectual turn from sin and the creature, to God and holiness: And that this habit or principle of divine grace must not only be wrought into the soul as a new habit or principle, but it must be maintained every moment by the same effectual influences of grace, and it must be entirely awakened and excited into exercise in this manner, in every good thought, word or deed: For he thinks such scriptures as these require it, viz. "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing, but our sufficiency is of God." 2 Cor. iii. 5. "We are dead in trespasses and sins." *Ephes.* ii. 1. "We are alienated from the life of God through the blindness of our hearts." chapter iv. 18. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," *John* iii. 6. and the works of the flesh they do: "They that are in the flesh cannot please God:" *Rom.* viii. 8. "We must be born of the Spirit, or we cannot see the kingdom of God." *John* iii. 5. "Without Christ we can do nothing." chapter xv. 5. "No man can come unto Christ unless it be given him of the Father, or unless the Father draw him." chapter vi. 44, 65. "Faith is the gift of God." *Ephes.* ii. 8. "Our good works must be wrought in God," *John* iii. 21. or thou, O Lord, hast wrought all our works in us." *Isaiab* xxvi. 12. "We must be born again." *John* iii. 7. "We must be new created unto good works." *Ephes.* ii. 10. "We must be quickened or raised from the dead." verses 5, 6. "It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure," *Phil.* ii. 13. And many other such scriptures which express the insufficiency of man, and the all-sufficient and sovereign grace of God, in the highest and most exalted language.

A re-

\* Though some of this class of writers use the word "irresistible," yet others of them dislike it, because the subjects of this grace may and sometimes do resist the operations of this grace and Spirit for a considerable time, but at last it must overcome; and therefore they rather chuse to call it "insuperable."

A renounces and disclaims utterly this opinion of C, because he supposes it to be inconsistent with the fifth proposition, or God's moral government of the world: "For, saith he, if mankind be so utterly destitute of all power whatsoever, to repent and accept of divine grace; and if it is God himself, who, by immediate physical or supernatural influences, does irresistibly work in every good christian, a principle of repentance and holiness, by a sovereign and effectual turn and bias given to their wills, and moves them to every act of duty, by sovereign, physical, or supernatural impressions; then men are no longer moral agents, and the freedom of their wills is lost in a kind of necessary mechanism. They are acted and moved like so many puppets, through the several services and stages of human life, and carried on to their own happiness in heaven, with such a force or power, and necessity, as takes away the very nature of virtue or piety, or any moral goodness, and does not leave so much as any act of obedience in their own free choice. This seems, says he, to disappoint the blessed God of the glory of his righteous government, and of the honour due to his rectoral justice, in the distribution of rewards and punishments.

"This insuperable and over-swaying grace, says he, seems also to run counter to many of those scriptures which represent this moral government of God, as carried on by rational means, arguments and motives, drawn from the excellency of religion, and from the fear and hope of rewards and punishments, by which the holy scriptures are perpetually addressing the consciences of men: For if this be indeed the case, saith A, men have no more real freedom than so many wooden images, actuated, impelled, and moved onward to the several ends which the maker of them designed. Now it can be no pleasure nor glory to the all-wise, all-righteous, and almighty being, who governs all things, to reward such creatures of mechanism with happiness in another world: nor will the honour of his wise and righteous judgment be manifested by such a conduct."

On the other hand C, who persists in the truth of this fifth proposition, and of God's moral government, still pretends that the wills of men, though swayed by irresistible grace, are yet truly free in every good work, because they still feel in themselves, a spontaneity or willingness to repent or obey, when God works thus powerfully upon them; though they confess they have not the freedom or liberty of chusing and refusing; because the grace is, and must be, irresistible or insuperable, and efficacious. Thus it is plain C is desirous to maintain all the six foregoing propositions, and thinks his scheme is consistent with them; and perhaps it might be so deemed, as he thus defends and explains himself.

But A is by no means satisfied with this sort of solution of the difficulty, this sort of freedom which admits not the will of man to chuse or refuse compliance with the operations of grace: "For it is plain, saith he, in this case, the persons who are so irresistibly moved to repentance and good works, may have a sort of supposed consciousness of their freedom all the way, because they feel themselves made willing; but it is a mere mistaken supposition, for they are no longer free creatures, because this very willingness is powerfully imposed upon them, and they cannot withstand it."

Therefore A is resolved to avoid all these inconveniencies, and on this account he supposes, that both in the first conversion of the soul, and in all future good actions, God has no farther hand than this, viz. first, that he forms the nature and temper of every man, with all his intellectual and animal powers, a knowing mind and free-will; that then he, by his providence, brings them to the hearing and knowledge of  
their



their own miserable state by nature, and the way of salvation, by hearing or reading of the gospel of *Christ*; that he secretly and gently, by particular occurrences of life, and by the insensible motions of his own Spirit, sets before men the things of God, and *Christ*, and eternity, with all motives proper to affect and persuade them; that he strikes some supernatural light into their understandings, and he allows some suasive or moral influences or touches of the grace of God, upon the will of men, so far as may relieve them against the too powerful opposition of corrupt nature, and render repentance and conversion easier, and more practicable: And he maintains also, that without these assistances, fallen man would not repent and be converted; and it is found among his expressions, "that grace is absolutely necessary to our having sufficient power to do good, and to perform every act of piety\*."

But after all this grace, A leaves men in a state of indeterminate doubt and indifference, whether they shall be finally persuaded to repentance or no: And this is the point of controversy between the disputants on this subject. This A maintains, that grace leaves the heart of man still in a sort of equilibrium, or wavering balance and uncertainty, to determine entirely for it self, whether it will receive the gospel or not, except, perhaps, in some very extraordinary case, as *Paul*, and some of the apostles, &c. who seem to be converted at once. And in short this is the chief center or hinge whereon the debate between A and C turns.

And yet A supposes still his doctrine is very consistent with all the six propositions, and particularly with the fourth, which ascribes the conversion and salvation of men so entirely to divine grace, as the supreme cause: "For, saith he, all the scriptures which ascribe our repentance and conversion to grace, are always supposed to speak in a consistence with God's moral government over free creatures, which many other texts assert and maintain: And therefore those expressions of grace must be interpreted with some limitation."

A thinks fit to add also, that he gives a fair exposition of the scriptures, which ascribe our salvation to the operations of grace, because grace has the chief hand therein; and without these various and necessary operations of grace, sinful man never would be converted and saved. Some of the professed partisans of A have thus expressed themselves §.

"The first way of reconciliation."

R, who cannot intirely approve of the opinion of C, for the reasons which A has given, yet is as much displeased with A's opinion, notwithstanding all the excuses he has made; because he fears, it seems, to contradict many of those express scriptures

\* See the remonstrances made by those who opposed the synod of *Dort*, whereby they plainly distinguish their opinions from the *pelagians*, and use this language which I have here represented. I wish all those christians in our age and nation, who profess to follow the opinions of the remonstrants, did but come so near to the doctrines of scripture, as the phrases and expressions of these men import.

§ In representing the *calvinist* and the *arminian* schemes here, I am not sensible that I have ascribed any one opinion to either of them, but what I am supported in by *John Calvin* and *Francis Turretin* on one side, and by *Philip Limborch* and the remonstrants at the synod of *Dort*, on the other side.

I grant it has been too often the practice of controversial writers on the *calvinist* side, to represent the *arminians* in the *pelagian* form; and the writers of the *arminian* party have again represented all the *calvinists* in the form of *supralapsarians* and *antinomians*: But this is the way to widen the divisions of the christian world, and inflame the spirits of men against their brethren, and not to reconcile them, which R has here attempted to do.

tures which ascribe the conversion, sanctification, and salvation of men, so powerfully, and plainly, and certainly, to God, and his Spirit, and his grace: And therefore he chuses another sentiment, which he thinks may reconcile all these difficulties; for he supposes his opinion to be more obviously and evidently consistent with the six propositions before laid down, and to be much more agreeable to all the expressions of scripture, which are urged both on the side of A and C: And on this account it is more happily suited, saith he, to ascribe to free grace it's full glory, as well as maintain the honours of God's moral government.

R's opinion therefore is this: He supposes that the fall of man has so perverted his natural powers, that inward effectual grace is necessary to save him; but that the will of man, both in it's first and general turn from sin to repentance and holiness, as well as in all future acts of obedience, maintains it's own liberty, as a power free to act, or not to act: And that it shall never be thus sovereignly, entirely, and irresistibly moved by God, the all-wise governor of mankind, as C imagines. But that, though there are some powerful divine influences, both toward the mind and the will, without which the man would never repent and be saved, yet the will is still a free faculty, and as such, is the only proper subject of moral government; and therefore it's freedom to chuse good or evil, must be always finally left to it's own determination, without which there would be no vice or virtue, nothing proper for reward or punishment, nor for any moral subjection to a wise and righteous creator and governor.

But since R believes the doctrine of particular persons elected to salvation, he goes a middle way to secure the salvation of *Christ* to the particular persons designed, viz. R supposes, that divine grace strikes such a new and perspicuous light into the mind or understanding by supernatural influence, and sets the great things of the gospel and eternity in such a powerful and bright view before the soul, as fully convinces the judgment, and such as God knows will effectually and certainly persuade the will, and all the following powers, to comply with the proposals of grace, both in the first actual turn of the heart or conversion, as well as in all future good actions: And as he knows it will have this certain effect, so he designs it shall.

"Thus, says he, the will of man is left to enjoy it's own natural freedom, and to chuse or refuse piety and happiness. God, by a knowledge and foresight of all the natures and tempers of men, and all the events of things, and by concurring thus far by the operations of his Spirit of grace, he does that by his grace, which he is certain will issue in the accomplishment of his own gracious designs; and yet he does not make it necessary by any absolute physical influence. He chuses some men to repentance and salvation from the beginning, he forms their natural powers, and he disposes of their providential circumstances in life, so as he foreknows will answer his gracious and eternal purposes; he enlightens their understandings so powerfully by his grace and Spirit, that he, who knows their frame, is certain will finally persuade their wills to comply with the proposals and demands of his gospel. And thus his electing grace obtains it's original design, without constraining the will of man, or intrenching upon the honour of God's moral government.

And to speak yet further in a philosophical sense, "R supposes the will of man to be so free and undeterminable by his other powers, that he does not suppose it to be naturally and necessarily moved in this compliance, even by the light of the mind; but that it feels it self persuaded and overcome in a moral way, by the powerful motives



tives and arguments which are set before the mind, and freely determines it self, and makes choice of the grace of God and salvation\*.

And he adds further, "that all these scriptures before-mentioned, which C has alleged, may be sufficiently and happily explained to maintain our own original sinfulness and impotence to all that is good, and to secure the necessity of divine grace; since he acknowledges that without this divine sovereign influence or illumination of the mind, the will of man would never be changed; and that God bestows this light or powerful illumination on the soul, on purpose to produce this divine change on the will; and he foreknows certainly, and designs that it shall produce it, though he does not make it necessary and irresistible. The great God may properly be said to "convert the soul, to change the heart or the will, to regenerate the man, to create a new nature within, and to save a sinner," when he strikes such a supernatural light into the mind, as he certainly knows and intends shall finally prevail over the will by moral influence or persuasion, though not by physical necessity, or any overpowering force, and absolute determination†.

"Thus, says he, divine grace has its complete honour, for it is the first and supreme mover in conversion, and without it no man would repent or turn to God; and hereby also, God has all the honours of his own government, in a moral way, over creatures that are endued with freedom of will to chuse or refuse their own happiness."

¶ I were to give my sentiments in the matter, I must confess I should like the opinion of R best, in as much as it happily secures and confirms the salvation of such particular persons as God has chosen, without making machines of them; for though R allows the grace of God to enlighten the mind, so far as shall certainly gain a victory over the will, and persuade it to repent, believe, and obey God, yet he supposes the will is left still in it's native freedom, which cannot be constrained, or absolutely and necessarily determined in it's acts or volitions, even by any ideas or perceptions of the mind, and he allows them only the moral force of motives to persuade the will: Thus the full honour of divine government, in all the moral views of it, is sufficiently maintained, as well as the proper freedom or liberty of the will of man; and God bestows salvation finally on those only who are persuaded to repent and accept of it. And herein lies the glory of God's moral government, that distributes rewards or punishments, according as men chuse or refuse good or evil.

But I think there might be a little improvement made to the sentiments of R thus. Is there not a great distinction to be made between the habit, or the principle of holiness in the heart, and the acts or exercises of it in the life? It is certain, there are, or may be, infused habits or principles, as well as acquired ones: As for instance; the apostles had a habit of talking *hebrew* or *syro-chaldaic* as their native language, which was acquired by learning from their childhood; but they had an infused habit or principle of speaking other strange languages, given them by the super-

\* See this matter explained more at large, in section v. of an "Essay on the freedom of will both in God and man, in this sixth volume".

† Whereas some call this grace "irresistible," and some prefer the word "insuperable;" R rather chuses to call it "effectual," which is a scriptural term; and "victorious," which is favoured by *Matth. xii. 21.* "Christ shall bring forth judgment unto victory"; which is interpreted, that he shall bring forth the knowledge of his gospel unto victory over the nations. Or it may be explained, he shall bring forth the judgment of the mind finally to a victory over the will and affections, which is a very near allusion, if not the true interpretation of the place.

supernatural power of God or his Spirit, at the day of *pentecost*, which they exercised immediately with great freedom, as related in *Acts* ii. 4—11.

Now since there may be habits or principles of faith, repentance and holiness, infused or inwrought immediately by divine power and grace, prior to all acts or exercises thereof; why may we not suppose, that besides the principles of light infused into the mind, whereby the judgment is convinced, there is an infused principle of holiness also formed or inwrought in the soul, in a physical or supernatural manner, by the Spirit or grace of God, which may excite and influence the will toward it's acts or volitions, but not constrain it? I mean, why may not the divine power, which formed the soul, give it a propensity or habitual inclination to what is good, like that which *Adam* had the first moment of his creation, though in a lower degree? This is part of the image of God which he had at first, and which is now to be renewed in man: And as this principle was an infused habit in *Adam*, why may it not be so in every true convert now? And further, as this did not necessitate the acts of the will to obedience, even in the day of innocence, so neither doth it now; but only gives it a disposition toward actual repentance and obedience, faith and holiness, at proper occasions: And I think this may very well be called new creation, regeneration, or resurrection from the dead, in the scriptural sense.

I do not see that this concession destroys the moral government of God over man now, any more than it did over *Adam* in his innocence, and especially since all moral government hath it's special regard to the actions wrought by the soul, rather than to the habits or principles which are in it; principles and habits neither are nor can be directly under the command of the will, as all actual volitions or actions are, which are therefore most properly subject to moral regulations.

I think all the rest of R's sentiments may stand just as he has proposed them.

I acknowledge, that there are several texts of scripture, which, in their literal sense, seem to speak the language of C, wherein the ruin of our nature, and it's impotence to all that is good, is set forth in it's strongest light, by the metaphors of blindness, and death in trespasses and sins: And the sovereignty of divine grace is described in it's brightest, and most sovereign and insuperable influences. But still I cannot help querying, as both A and R do, whether this literal sense of those words, this absolute and necessary determination both of the mind and will, and all the powers of man in it's first conversion, and in all future good actions, does not detract too much from God's moral government of the world? And whether all these metaphors and emblems, and bright representations of scripture, may not be sufficiently interpreted in plain language, and their proper sense, according to the explication of the grace of God, and it's efficacious influences, which R has made; especially if we take in the almighty infusion of a supernatural habit of holiness; always remembering that R allows the divine influences on the mind to be so great, as he knows will certainly persuade the will to repent and accept of grace, and designs that it shall have this effect, though not in a way of resistless force and necessity. And why may not this sufficiently answer those scriptures which assert God's "working in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure?" *Phil.* ii. 13.

On the other hand, I question whether the opinions of A have ever been easily and plainly reconciled with such a multitude of scriptures, which the followers of C produce in the defence of their opinions concerning divine grace.

However it be, I think the sentiments both of A, C, and R, may, in some tolerable measure, be reconciled to all the six propositions I laid down at first; at least they all declare they design them to be so; though perhaps some of them are more



easily and happily suited to some of these propositions, and others do best consist with the rest of them. Thus much for the first part of this discourse.

“ The second way of reconciliation ”.

A further principle of reconciliation between A, C, and R, is now in my thoughts, and it is this:

Let us enquire whether the sentiments of A, as well as of R and C, do not imply and suppose the certain designation of certain persons to a final salvation; and consequently whether A has any reason to cast any reproaches upon the doctrine of particular election and special grace, since his own sentiments will lead very nearly to the same doctrine. This will appear by the following steps of enquiry.

1. Doth not A suppose, that the providential transactions of divine power and grace, in the formation of the natural powers of every man, and the disposal of the circumstances of any man's life, under pious parents, or an useful ministry, or occasional conversation, &c. were designed by the great God, as helps and mediums towards the repentance and salvation of those that are saved?

2. Does not A allow of such operations of grace, by illumination and suasion of the mind and will, as the great God sees to be not only sufficient, but necessary under the present dreadful degeneracy of man, toward the conversion and salvation of those who are saved, even though they proceed no farther than to leave the will of man in a state of balancing indifference, to accept or refuse the offered grace?

3. Does not A likewise admit these operations of grace to be exerted with a friendly design towards these men, to facilitate their faith and repentance, and make the way plainer and easier towards their salvation? And does he not grant that God is best pleased, when such a person repents and accepts of his gospel, according to his kind designs?

4. Does he not also believe, that the blessed God foresees and foreknows that these men, by the free use of their natural powers, thus far assisted by divine grace, will be finally and effectually persuaded to believe, and repent, and be saved?

5. Has not the blessed God, who knows all his own works from the beginning, designed from eternity to bestow all these advantages on those particular persons, and to carry them on so far, that he foresees their repentance and salvation will be the certain consequences of this his grace, though not the necessary effects of it?

6. I would ask, whether, if the blessed God gives so much outward and inward grace to certain men, as he foresees and knows will be certainly improved by them to their salvation, and without which they could not repent and be saved, may it not be properly said, that God designs the salvation of these particular persons, that he elects or chuses them unto eternal life\*, that he converts and brings them to repentance by his grace, and that he stands justly intitled to their everlasting praises, as the supreme and certain author of their faith and repentance, and salvation?

In the last place then, may I not enquire, whether or no it be not consistent with A's own opinions in the main, to allow those expressions of scripture their proper force and meaning, which speak of God's “ election of men to salvation, of his chusing them in *Christ Jesus*, of his giving them to *Christ*, of his bestowing faith and repentance upon them, preserving or keeping them by his power unto salvation,” and conducting them safely onward to happiness? And whether it will not be much more

\* May not the words of St. Paul, *Rom. viii. 29.* be perfectly applied to this scheme, “ Whom he foreknew he also did predestinate, &c.”

more natural and easy, to interpret such scriptures concerning the election, conversion and salvation of particular persons, than to put a strain and force upon some of them, and to interpret them only concerning his giving the outward means of grace to a nation or a people, or chusing the heathen nations in general to be acquainted with his salvation, without the application of it to any particular person whatsoever?

I would fain enquire, whether or no, if serious christians are but desirous and inclined to come as near to each other as they can, in their sentiments of divine things, if they are but willing to be reconciled to one another, as far as the present darkneses and difficulties will allow of; I say, whether they may not embrace one another heartily, and unite so far in their sentiments as I have represented? This will take away a thousand cavils and contentions, and a thousand unchristian reproaches, from the lips and pens of those who worship the same God, believe in the same Saviour, hope for the operations of the same blessed Spirit, and desire to ascribe their salvation to the same grace of God, who is blessed for evermore? Amen.

## Q U E S T I O N XV.

*What is the state and condition of the heathens, who have never heard of the gospel, or have utterly forgot and lost all notices of it?*

**I**T is not to be doubted that the gospel has been twice preached to all mankind; first by *Adam* to his family, which came from the mouth of God, who promised the seed of the woman to become a Saviour; and then by *Noah*, who was a preacher of righteousness, and doubtless of grace also, to his three sons, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japheth*. Now *Adam* and *Noah* were the fathers of all mankind, before and since the flood: And in the early ages it is evident, that the knowledge of the true God and religion, in some degrees of it, did continue in several families of *Noah's* sons for a considerable time; such as the families of *Melchizedek* king of *Salem*, *Abimelech* king of *Gerar*, *Job* in the land of *Uz*, and his four friends, and many others. And whosoever in following ages retained so much knowledge of God and his promised mercy, as to engage them in repentance of all their sins, in faith or dependence on divine grace, and in new obedience to the will of God, might obtain salvation.

How many or how few these were, and what favourable allowances God might make, and other enquiries relating to this subject, may be found more largely discoursed of in a treatise entitled, "A caveat against infidelity," and in a book called, "The strength and weakness of human reason,"\* both published a few years ago. Nor do I know how to explain and determine the questions relating to this subject, in a more conspicuous manner, than those two writings have done it; so that I chuse to ask the favour of my readers to seek their satisfaction in those discourses.

However, concerning the heathens, I may venture to deliver one plain and certain truth, because it is manifestly founded upon scripture; and that is, since the corruption of nature through all mankind is so great and deplorable, since the hope of recovery,

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\* See Volume II. pages 296—310. and pages 509—515.



covery, by the covenant of grace, hath only those faint and feeble discoveries of it made to the heathens, which the general goodness and long-suffering of God might afford them, and since they have no outward call from the word to repentance and hope, it is evident that the righteous God will inflict but small punishment upon such heathen sinners, in comparison of those who shall fall under the express sentence of damnation, for having neglected or resisted the grace of the gospel, which has been published to them by *Jesus Christ* or the apostles, or by any discoveries of the things of the new testament, in the nations or ages where they have lived. And thus our Lord himself declares, when he denounces his heavy woes against *Chorazin*, *Bethsaida*, and *Capernaum*; and asserts, that the punishments of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, shall be tolerable in comparison of those who shall be found sinners against the clear and express publication of the gospel, in the great judgment-day. *Matth. xi. 20—24.*

The testimony of *St. Paul*, *Acts xvii. 30.* seems also to support the same opinion, where he tells us, “that God winked at those times of this ignorance,” wherein the heathen and idolatrous nations lived before the manifestation of the gospel. The word *irrepiscent* doth not mean that he let them go without punishment, for, *Rom. ii. 9, 12.* “Tribulation and anguish will fall upon every soul that doth evil, whether Jew or gentile. Those who have sinned without law, shall perish without law:” But God took but little notice of them with an eye of punishing justice, in comparison of those who shall hear of those solemn calls to repentance which are now given to men by the gospel of *Christ*, and the preaching of the judgment of the world by him. Thus every sinner’s punishment in the other world, shall stand in an exact proportion to the aggravation of the sins they have committed, considered together with the different degrees of light and knowledge they have received. Divine justice will measure out to every one their righteous proportions, with perfect exactness.

## Q U E S T I O N XVI.

*What will be the state and condition of that large part of mankind who die in infancy, under any of the dispensations of the covenant of grace?*

Answer. **I**T is a very large part of mankind, indeed, that dies in the infant state, before they arrive at any capacity to know God or their duty, virtue or vice, and therefore they cannot be charged with actual sin, or rewarded for actual obedience. If we may judge by the yearly bills of mortality\*, we find more than a third

\* Perhaps it will be said, that the bills of mortality in or near *London*, are no sufficient rule to judge of the deaths of mankind in general, because multitudes of young creatures die there for want of air and conveniences of life. But let it be remembered also, that in the savage nations of *Asia*, *Africa* and *America*, there are more of those young creatures die for want of due care, and for want also of the methods of human skill to relieve the diseases of children, and by this means some of the savage countries are almost depopulated, and the nations destroyed, as travellers inform us. So that take all mankind together, and I am ready to think “the bills of mortality,” in and near *London*, may pretty nearly yield us a just calculation as to this matter.

a third part of the race of man dying before they arrive at two years old, and about half before five: A dreadful devastation of nature! A wide spectacle of ruin, diffused over all nations and ages, by the sin of their common father!

It is true, we cannot tell at what age of life, or at what degrees of growing reason, the great God will appoint children to stand upon their own foot, and will deal with them as rational creatures, as intelligent and free agents, according to their own personal actions and behaviour. Some perhaps shall sooner be adjudged capable and sufficient to act for themselves, and shall be dealt with according to their own moral conduct, and some much later; and both according to their degrees of capacity to "know, to chuse, and to refuse good or evil." But this season is known only to God himself, and the "judge of all the earth will do right." *Gen. xviii. 25.*

In the mean time, while they are deemed infants, and have no personal sin or obedience of their own, but only lie under the sentence of death for the sin of *Adam*, so far as it is imputed to them, let us not send any of their little souls into a separate state of torment, as soon as death has seized their bodies, without an express divine warrant: Nor let us raise up their bodies again from the dead, and then doom them, soul and body, to intense anguish and everlasting fire and sorrow, merely for *Adam's* sin, unless we can find some very evident sentence of this kind passed upon them in the word of God. The equity and the compassion of a God, so far as we can judge of it by the light of reason, would not inflict so severe and eternal a punishment on these little creatures, who are personally innocent or free from actual sin: And unless we can find some divine revelation that pronounces it with great strength and evidence, let us not so far contradict the gentler dictates of nature and reason, as to assert this opinion for truth, nor impose it on our own belief, nor on the belief of others.

Let us try then, whether we cannot find out some milder punishment for their share of the guilt of *Adam*, in the bible. May we not humbly suppose, that a most wise, most righteous, and most merciful God, will deal with them according to the following principles, derived partly from the scriptures, and partly from the reason of things?

Principle I. As the children of men had all been born innocent and happy, and had worn out their infant-state in innocence and happiness, if *Adam* their father and surety had stood firm in his obedience; so by his fall and disobedience to God, we have already proved that they are all involved with him in so much of his guilt and misery, as that they come into the world with natures corrupted and vitiated, both with the principles of sin and seeds of death. This we have shewn before: And they are exposed hereby to death, that is, to the common and everlasting forfeiture of all those blessings, and all that life and existence, both of soul and body, which God had freely given them: See question XI. section III. of eternal death. And as for the execution of this general sentence, we find it so far executed on children, that they suffer the pains and agonies of mortality, and at last bodily death; though they "have not sinned; that is, personally and actually, after the similitude of *Adam's* transgression," as in *Rom. v. 14.* and there the scripture leaves them, that is, in death and the grave.

Principle II. It has been granted, that the actual and personal sin of *Adam* might provoke his maker so far, as to continue his soul in it's natural immortality after his bodily life was forfeited and finished; and this is because he was a personal and actual sinner: And God may see it divinely proper, that he should suffer long anguish of conscience,



conscience, tribulation and wrath after death, according to the aggravation of his personal crime, that is, upon supposition that he accepted not the covenant of grace: Yet it does not follow, that the great God will punish the mere imputed guilt of his infant-posterity in so severe a manner; or that he will continue their souls in being, whose whole life and being is forfeited by *Adam's* sin, and that he will give them their being and life again, and fix them in an immortal state, merely to make them suffer long anguish and endless misery for the sin of *Adam*. Nor is this severity any where taught us in the word of God; and I am well assured, that our reasonings from the goodness and equity of God will incline us to judge more favourably of his sentence upon infants, and will lead us to the milder and softer side of the question, as I intimated before.

Principle III. There is one very good reason to suppose that the great God will resume the forfeited life and existence of the souls of children as well as of their bodies, and will not continue their immortal spirits to suffer tormenting punishment for ever; because having no personal sin, they can have no anguish of conscience, nor inward vexation: They cannot suffer any self-reproaches for sin, for they have committed none: Nor can this be conveyed to them by any imputed guilt of *Adam*, though it is a very great part of the punishment of souls for actual sin, as being the natural effect of personal transgression and guilt. If therefore they are punished for *Adam's* sin in another world, it must probably be by actual pains and torments inflicted on them by God himself, since the most natural effects of sin, that is, guilt and anguish of conscience, cannot reach them: And is it agreeable to the nature and mercy of a God to inflict such positive and endless pains or torments with his own hand, on such little creatures, who are free from all personal iniquity, and have no other crime but that they were born of *Adam*?

Principle IV. If you should imagine that the mere sense of the loss of God's favour, without any actual inflictions of pain, is all the punishment that children shall suffer in their souls; tell me how that can be without some positive and actual agency of God in it? For unless God, some way or other, give them a sense what his favour is, and what is the loss of it, how can they have this knowledge? And since they have not lived in this world long enough to acquire any ideas of a "God, a creature, a law, obedience and transgression, sin and duty, the favour of God, the loss of his favour, punishment," &c. it is hardly to be supposed, that the blessed God will furnish them with these ideas in a future state of immortality, merely and for no other reason but to make them feel their misery in their eternal loss of the divine favour; and that on no other account, but for having been once born into this world in an unhappy relation to *Adam*, the actual sinner. Those short miseries which end with life, are much more easy to be accounted for upon the foot of divine resentment for *Adam's* sin, than any everlasting pains.

The late learned doctor *Ridley* indeed, in his discourses of original sin, with modesty and ingenuity has represented this sentiment to the world: And I cannot but declare myself so far of his opinion, that the blessed God will not impress on them these ideas of divine things, nor shew the souls of infants in the other world what are those powers and pleasures which they have lost by *Adam's* sin, on purpose only to torment those little creatures, who never knew what sin was, nor ever sinned against God in their wills, by actual personal disobedience.

But whereas doctor *Ridley* supposes the immortal existence of such infant-souls in a sort of stupid ignorance or insensibility, which the scripture no where intimates,  
I think

I think it is much more natural and reasonable to suppose, that God will deprive both body and soul of life which *Adam* had forfeited for himself and for them, according to the first threatening of death: And since the book of scripture has not revealed it, I cannot find it in the book of reason, nor can I conceive what end it can attain in divine providence, to continue so many millions of infant-souls in an eternal state of stupor: Is it agreeable to the conduct of infinite wisdom, and the government of a God, to maintain such an innumerable multitude of ideots, equal in number to almost all the rest of the human race, in a long endless duration, and to reign over such an immense nation of senseless and thoughtless immortals?

I add yet further, it is very hard to understand how a human soul, which I cannot conceive of but as a thinking being, should exist without any ideas at all, and that for eternal ages. Upon the whole therefore, the state of non-existence, to which we here suppose them to be reduced after death, is much more probable, being the least demerit of imputed sin, or an everlasting forfeiture of life, and a sort of endless punishment without pain.

Principle V. Neither have we any intimations from scripture, that all the bodies of infants will be raised again at the great day, in order to come into judgment: And if we will suffer ourselves to think and judge without prejudice, we may find it highly probable, that there are many thousands of infant-bodies, which will never be restored to life, nor their persons be summoned to judgment in the last great day; and that for these two reasons.

Reason I. We have before shewn, that as bodily death was threatened by the law of innocency or covenant of works to *Adam*, as the head of a numerous race, so this is evidently executed upon all his infant-seed; for "death has reigned over them" in every age, as the punishment of *Adam's* sin, being so far imputed to them; as *Rom. v. 12—14*. But there is no resurrection of the body included in that threatening; nor can we reasonably suppose, that the most gracious God, who has never threatened it, will raise these infant-bodies into an endless life, merely to suffer everlasting anguish and pain in the body, for the imputed sin of their first father, since they have no actual or personal guilt of their own. Mere imputed sin, without actual transgression, is the least and lowest sort of guilt that can be; and therefore it is highly probable, a righteous and merciful God will inflict on them the least and lowest sort of punishment threatened to sin, that is, death in the mildest sense of it, or an universal and eternal destruction of soul and body, which are forfeited by sin.

Reason II. When the resurrection of sinners is mentioned in scripture, it is always that they may be judged expressly "according to their works, according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil." *2 Cor. v. 10*. Now infants have done no works of sin or righteousness: They are not moral agents in the infant-state; and it is not said in scripture, that such shall be brought into judgment. The enquiries and decisions of a judgment-seat are only appointed for actual sinners. See the words of scripture on this subject, *John v. 28, 29*. "The hour is coming, when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they who have done good to the resurrection of life, and they who have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." *Rev. xx. 12, 13*. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, that is, the high and low, rich and poor,—and they were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up it's dead, and death and hell, or the grave, or the separate state,

gave



gave up their dead, and they were judged, every man according to their works." Observe here, that the words "small and great" must signify persons of high and low degree, who can be judged according to their works; but the word "small" cannot signify infants, because they have no moral works for which they might be judged.

Principle VI. And indeed, where any future punishments of the other world are represented in scripture, it is always for the actual transgressions of persons who are capable of knowing, chusing and refusing good or evil, which infants are not capable of doing; for the word of God gives us this very character of an infant, *Isai. vii. 16.* viz. that he "knows not to refuse the evil and chuse the good." Let us look into the texts where future judgment and future punishments are described. *Ecclef. xi. 9.* "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth,—and walk in the ways of thy heart,—but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." and chapter *xii. 14.* It is only visible works of the life, or secret workings of the thoughts, that is, moral actions, "that God will bring into judgment, whether they be good or evil." *Matth. xii. 36.* "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." *Matth. xxv. 41, 42.* "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, for I was a hungered and ye gave me no meat;—I was naked and ye clothed me not, &c. *Rom. ii. 3, 5, 6.* "Thinkest thou, O man, who judgest them which do such things, and dost the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds." *2 Cor. v. 10.* "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or evil." All this refers only to the actual works of men. Nor can I find in the whole book of God, any one syllable of the punishment of infants, either in their souls or bodies after this life; all that the scripture reveals of punishment in a world to come, whether it be in the separate state, or at the resurrection, falls upon those only who have been guilty of actual personal transgressions, and are proper objects of a judgment.

Principle VII. You will ask here, "Is there no resurrection then for the bodies of the infants of good and pious persons, who have repented of their sins, returned to God, and accepted of the covenant of grace in all its extent, for time and eternity? Is there no happy rising-day for the dying children of those parents, who have laid a humble claim to God as their God, and the God of their seed, and have devoted themselves to him according to the language of God's covenant with *Abraham*? Do not these "blessings come upon the gentiles through *Jesus Christ*?" *Gal. iii. 14.* You will ask, whether I myself have not explained the covenant of grace, with the blessings of it, to extend to the children of believers, or good men, under question XII. section VI? And must all these children lie in the grave, and under the power of death for ever? Doth not God's being their God imply their resurrection? Doth "not *Christ* himself prove the resurrection of the dead from this very principle, that

\* And to confirm this sense of the words "small and great," let it be considered, that in another text of the same writer, these words cannot mean infants and adult, but must signify "poor and rich, or mean and honourable," *Rev. xiii. 18.* because they are both said to fear the name of the Lord, which cannot be ascribed to infants,

God is the God of *Abraham*, and *Isaac*," &c. *Luke* xx. 37, 38? And must not such children therefore be raised from the dead?" To this I answer,

Answer. I have allowed this under the twelfth question, and I confirm it all here: For whatever I have said under this last question concerning infants, relates to those only who stand upon the foot of *Adam's* broken covenant of works, and have no interest in a better covenant; that is, it belongs only to the children of wicked men who died in *Adam*, and who have not received or accepted of the covenant of mercy and life through *Jesus Christ*: But the infant-off-spring of those who have repented of sin, and accepted of the covenant of grace, are, in my opinion, included in the blessings of the covenant of *Abraham*, which come upon gentile believers and their seed, as well as on the *Jews* through *Jesus Christ*, in the spiritual and eternal extent of them; for "*Christ* was the minister of the circumcision, or sent to the *Jewish* nation, to confirm the promises of God made unto the fathers, that is, *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy." See *Gal.* iii. 14. *Rom.* xv. 8. And therefore there is much reason to believe from many places of scripture, that as they have a share in this covenant of grace and the blessings thereof through the faith and piety of their parents, being incapable to put forth an act of faith or piety themselves, so they shall be raised again to an eternal life of holiness and happiness together with their parents, as the sons and daughters of *Abraham* who have God for their God.

Principle VIII. As there are several texts of scripture from which I suppose such inferences may be made, so if I mistake not, there are one or two speeches of the prophets which seem to intend and mean the resurrection and happiness of the children of true christians.

If we look into *Isai.* lxxv. 23. God is there speaking concerning the blessing which shall come upon his people in the christian church, when those *Jews* who had refused the *Messiah* were cut off, and God calls his own people by another name, that is, christians. The promise is this, "They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble, for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their off-spring with them." Now we find by experience in all ages of the christian church, that infants die, as well as they did before; and yet it is said, "Their parents shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble." How can this be fulfilled, but by the right of their children to the extensive blessings of the covenant of grace, that is, a resurrection to eternal life? And it is put upon this foot, that "they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, they enjoy the blessing of their father *Abraham* in whom all nations are blessed, that God is their God and the God of their off-spring together with them."

The other text is, *Jer.* xxxi. 15. compared with *Matth.* ii. 17. where the prophet *Jeremy* is cited; "A voice was heard in *Rama*, lamentation and bitter weeping; *Rachel* weeping for her children refused to be comforted, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord, refrain thy voice from weeping and thy eyes from tears: Thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy; and there is hope in thy end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border." Though this prophecy might have some sort of accomplishment at the captivity of the children of *Benjamin* the son of *Rachel* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, and the restoration of their posterity by *Cyrus*, yet it seems more literally, plainly and expressly to be fulfilled by the slaughter of the infants in *Bethlehem* near *Rama*, as *St. Matthew* explains it, and by their return from the land of



the last enemy, death, and their standing in their own border, that is, in the heavenly *Canaan*, where their parents considered in prophecy as true *israelites*, have obtained the promised inheritance: And thus the mother's travel, in bearing the children, as well as her work of faith and prayer for her children, shall be rewarded by beholding them return from the land of death, their common enemy, and placed together with themselves in the heavenly paradise, which is their border or portion.

It is therefore only the children of wicked parents concerning whom I suppose the wisdom, justice and mercy of God will join to destroy them entirely by death, or to resume the forfeited life of soul and body.

It seems evident to me, that though there are some hints and reasonable hopes of the happy resurrection of the off-spring of good men to be derived from scripture, yet all other children in this world are also brought down to death for the sin of *Adam* by the word of God, and they are left in death: But neither reason nor scripture, so far as I can find, provides any happiness or unhappiness, any reward or punishment for them in a world to come; and how can we go further than reason or scripture will lead us?

And if I may freely speak my own sentiments here, I would say, since neither reason nor scripture, certainly and plainly teach us any thing concerning the souls of the infants of wicked men after death; and if I must not leave them in a state of non-existence, I would much rather chuse to suppose them at the death of the body entered into a new and personal state of trial, than I would condemn them to a wretched resurrection and eternal misery for nothing else, but because they were born of *Adam*, the original transgressor.

This is only a comparative thought by the way. But to pursue and support my present scheme of their annihilation at death, I must answer two or three objections following.

Principle IX. Against this hypothesis it will be perhaps objected, first, of what use can it be for the great God to bring so many thousand souls of the children of wicked parents into being, to destroy them so soon?

Answer I. Who can tell me of what use it can be for God to create so many millions of animated beings in the sea, or in the woods and deserts for so short a continuance? Who can tell why he should exert his almighty power to produce so many myriads of fishes which man never sees, and insects, engines of curious and divine artifice, of which millions are brought forth in one day, which are never seen of men, and which in a few weeks or months perish again, and are lost for ever? It is as easy with omnipotence to create souls as bodies, or to make men as worms: And it is the illustrious and unconceivable magnificence of his government, that he can produce worlds of such wonderful creatures and destroy them without any loss, though he should never acquaint us with any of his reasons or purposes for this conduct. Why must such sorry creatures as men are, be acquainted with the designs and reasons of every thing that a God thinks fit to do?

Answer II. Though the purposes and ends of the great God are far above our reach; yet we may suppose God to have this wise design in the creation and destruction of so many children, viz. to let those wicked parents, as well as their neighbours, see the constant evil of sin in the effects or punishment thereof, even of the sin of *Adam* in the weaknesses and pains and death of their children; and to keep a lively image of these things always before the eyes of men, in the continual succession of so many visible agonies and dying groans and deaths of mankind in their youngest hours

hours of life. This same design and effect is attained also by the mortality and deaths of all children, even those of pious parents, whose souls are carried to heaven by the covenant of grace and the faith of their parents. God will have a continual sense of the evil of this original sin maintained in all the families of mankind, and this is a sufficient reason for his conduct.

Principle X. Let me now mention a second objection against this set of thoughts concerning infants; and that is, if the children of wicked parents do not rise from the dead, but are destroyed soul and body, as lying under the original sentence of death, will not this opinion tempt parents to be negligent of the lives of their infants? And some perhaps might be tempted to put them to death, that they may not grow up to sin, and thereby expose themselves to eternal misery. I answer,

Answer. That good persons cannot be guilty of this crime; for such wilful and inhuman murder would be a plain proof they had no true religion nor goodness nor interest in the covenant of grace: Nor can they have any such temptation if they walk according to this covenant, because the blessings of the covenant of grace are secured to their seed. As for wicked parents, they have so much natural love and concern for the welfare of their children in this life, and so little regard to any thing of a future world, that there is no great danger of this event. The ties of nature and parental affection in the men of the world are generally much stronger than any thing else that relates to another world. There are many of the wicked among men, who actually believe that children have no future state, and yet we do not find this temptation prevail.

But further, Can we suppose any person can be so mad and inconsistent as to fear the future uncertain danger of God's wrath for a child, if he has no fear of it for himself? Or will he run himself into certain present damnation if he die under such an impious and inhuman sin of wilful murder, in order to secure a child from the future uncertain danger of impenitence and damnation, that is, if it live to man's estate and grow wicked? This is so unnatural a temptation, especially to wicked parents who have little regard to future and eternal things, that if the representation which I have made of the case of infants, be agreeable to reason and scripture, I think the danger of such a supposed possible inconvenience is so small, as is by no means sufficient to refute this scheme of thoughts, or to forbid the publication of it.

Principle XI. I should here also take notice that there is a third objection against my hypothesis; and that is, there have been some persons who suppose we have no need of this annihilating scheme concerning the case of infants, to mollify the severity of it, since in their opinion, one half of the fifth chapter to the *Romans* represents our Lord *Jesus Christ* as removing entirely all the guilt of the sin of *Adam* from mankind, and that the misery and destruction that was brought on the race of mankind, by the fall of their first parents, is effectually cancelled and abolished by the obedience and death of the Son of God, excepting only their sickness and natural death of their bodies, which infants are subject to as well as grown persons. But to this I answer,

Answer. The design of that chapter is to shew, that God has laid as sufficient and solid a foundation in the obedience and death of *Christ* for the recovery of men from the ruins of their nature, their guilt and misery, in and by the covenant of grace, as *Adam* had laid for the ruin and destruction of his posterity according to the covenant



nant of works: But as none but the posterity of *Adam* are involved in his curse, so the blessing is only applied there to those who become the seed and posterity of *Christ* by faith and repentance, and by accepting the covenant of grace: for it is sufficiently evident from constant experience and observation in opposition to this opinion, that sin and pain and death, which were brought in by the fall of *Adam*, still infect human nature in every son and daughter of man which comes into the world: and how can these evident consequents and legal penalties of sin continue among infants, if all the guilt and consequent effects of *Adam's* sin be taken away from them by the undertaking of *Christ*? Our daily and constant experience abundantly proves that this opinion of the universal and actual abolition of sin, and the curse brought in by *Adam* on his infant race must be a mere mistake.

Principle XII. And if it should be said still, that this recovery of mankind from the curse by *Jesus Christ*, so far as it belongs to infants, chiefly refers to their future state after death, and that it ensures salvation universally to all who die in infancy; I might very well answer,

Answer I. That neither do the words of that place of scripture, nor does its connexion with the context discover this doctrine there; and I think it would be very hard to prove it without some clearer testimony of scripture. Besides,

Answer II. If we consult the word of God from one end to the other of it, we shall find no blessing or curse coming upon children in their very infancy, but by the covenant or conduct or character of their parents. If the children of *Adam* die, they are doomed to death together with him. *Rom. v. 12—21*. If *Abram's* seed are blessed, it is together with their father. *Gen. xvii. 7—14*. If the unbelieving *Jews* are the branches broken off from the good olive-tree, their little buds are broken off together with them; and if the believing gentiles are grafted into it, their buds or tender offspring are grafted in together with them also. *Rom. xi. 17—24*. The scripture gives us no account of God's dealing with children in their infancy, but as a part of their parents, and considered as one with them. Now how shall the children of wicked men, according to the current of scripture, be brought into this salvation by *Christ*, if their parents do not accept nor share in this salvation? In the third place,

Answer III. I would enquire whether this opinion that all infants are saved, doth not much more directly and abundantly expose children to the inconvenience of the foregoing objection, viz. by tempting wicked parents to send them to heaven, either by neglecting or destroying their lives upon earth, in order to convey them to certain happiness. A wicked man, or woman, who has never so many children, will be tempted upon this foot to say, why should I take any care of these children, let them come into the world as fast as they will, and let them die as fast as they come; there are so many more inhabitants of heaven; and why should I nurse them up in life merely to bring them into the danger of hell? Is not this a temptation much greater than that of sending them into non-existence?

Answer IV. I add in the last place, that if all children, dying in infancy, are certainly saved, what are the special privileges which are so often asserted in scripture to belong to the children of pious parents and the seed of *Abram*, in having God to be their God? Does not this sufficiently intimate some superior favour to the children of good men, who have accepted the covenant of grace in *Christ Jesus*, above what is promised to the children of the wicked, who have broken the covenant of works, and who have no share in the blessings of the covenant of grace for themselves or their posterity, because they have not accepted of it? Has the offspring of the righteous

teous no advantage of the wicked after all these gracious words of promise? I fear such an opinion does not bear a kind aspect on the faithfulness of God in his word, to represent and promise that as a peculiar kindness and grace to the children of good men, which equally belongs to all, even the most impious and wicked.

Upon the whole, the opinion of the salvation of all children, as it has no countenance from the bible, so it has no foundation in the reason of things; and the scheme of the transactions of God with men, as represented in scripture, appears much more consistent and uniform according to the hypothesis I have here proposed.

Yet if any of my readers are utterly averse to these sentiments, let them find out wherein I have run counter to the word of God. The scripture brings down the infants of wicked parents to the grave, and leaves them there, and so do I: The scripture has not provided any resurrection for them, neither can I do it. And, in matters of pure revelation, though we may propose an expedient to solve great difficulties, yet I would be always cautious of asserting what God has not revealed.

*Conclusion; or the advantages of this whole scheme.*

**T**HUS I have endeavoured to trace out, so far as my reason would assist me, what relief may be given to some of those doctrines of revelation which seem to have a harsh sound, or a painful and disagreeable appearance in them, and which might seem to lay any imputation upon the conduct of God and providence. It is and must be confessed there are some difficulties which attend the doctrine of original sin and misery spreading over all the race of man, and the doctrine of the saving grace of God in *Christ Jesus* providing a way of recovery for a lost world, even for all that are willing to accept it, and yet at the same time securing some certain success to the undertaking of *Christ* in the salvation of those whom the Father hath given him. And yet all these seem to be doctrines pretty plainly taught in the holy scriptures: Nor are they mere opinions for speculation, but they have a great and important influence upon our practice.

If we are well persuaded of original sin, and that our natures are so corrupt and degenerate, we shall learn to lie humble before a God of majesty and holiness, which is the very first part of all our religion. We shall also be candid and meek and compassionate towards each other without pride or scorn, being all liable to the same mistakes and infirmities, the same passions and miseries, and being all involved in the same condemnation and degeneracy.

And if we shall find that the doctrine of the imputed sin of *Adam* is so far from being a difficulty or hardship in this article, that it is the only effectual way to solve the propagation of the universal corruption and misery of our natures, and to absolve the conduct of God from all blame, we shall raise no more murmuring cavils against the providence of God herein, but receive it in the light in which the scripture seems to have represented it with all submission and silence. God is just, though man be sinful and miserable.

If



If we are made deeply sensible of our universal guilt and degeneracy in *Adam*, we shall thankfully rejoice in every discovery of divine mercy, and especially in the gospel of *Jesus Christ*, who is the second *Adam*, and the only appointed way of our salvation: We shall be more prepared to receive it with greater humility, gratitude and joy, when we see our souls so utterly lost and undone in a state of nature: And we shall depend more intirely upon the grace of God the Father, and his Son *Jesus*, and the influences of the blessed Spirit, for every part of our restoration and recovery.

All the doctrines of the special grace of God, of the redemption of *Christ*, and of the sanctifying Spirit, lie much more easy and obvious before the eye, when we are made deeply sensible of our universal ruin and misery. That humble temper of soul which this doctrine requires, will more readily subdue all the rising cavils of the mind against the methods of saving mercy.

If we believe that the undertaking of *Christ* is secured of success, and that multitudes of souls shall certainly obtain this salvation, this is matter of thankfulness and hope, since all mankind lay in one common ruin: And we have encouragement to all diligence in the duties of repentance, faith and new obedience, since "he that seeks shall find, and to him that knocks it shall be opened," *Matth. vii. 8.* and since this is the only way for us to obtain our share in the success of the labours and sufferings of *Christ*, and the blessings that are derived from them. And when we have found our own hearts sincerely and effectually turned to God by the gospel, and our natures and our lives formed unto holiness, we have then high encouragement to believe the security of our interest in the mediation of *Christ* and the salvation of the gospel, and to rejoice in hope.

And if we take with us also this comprehensive and compassionate doctrine of the sincere and extensive offers of mercy to every sinner, according to the degree of the discoveries of the grace of God in the age and nation wherein he lives, we shall acquire a more large, more generous and diffusive benevolence to all our fellow-creatures of the race of *Adam*: We shall give a large foundation for hope to every guilty creature among mankind, assuring them that the great God hath debarred none from his mercy but those who debar themselves by impenitence and unbelief. We shall vindicate the goodness and justice of God in his dispensations towards men, and leave the final condemnation of wilful impenitents, and of all the wicked of the earth, intirely upon their own heads.

If it be enquired, what farther advantages can be derived from so peculiar a doctrine as this last section contains, viz. that the "children of unregenerate or unholy parents, who never lived to do good or evil, and died only under the guilt of *Adam's* sin, have sustained their whole penalty at death, and will never be raised to life again?" I answer, in these three particulars.

Answer I. Hereby the conduct of divine providence, with regard to the millions of infant creatures in all the numerous nations of the earth, will be justified from the severe censures which have been cast upon it by men in accusing the doctrine of original sin: For if they suffer nothing but temporal death, as being fallen in *Adam* their head, all these terrors of pretended cruelty and severity will vanish, while it appears that eternal damnation belongs only to those who have been guilty of actual transgression in their own persons; for there is not one word in all the scripture concerning eternal misery inflicted upon any person merely for the sin of *Adam*.

Answer II. This hypothesis not only absolves the providence of God from supposed cruelty, but perhaps it represents it as good and gracious towards far the greatest part  
of

of those that are born of *Adam*; while they are not suffered to live and grow up amidst the temptations of this world, and under their present corrupt principles of nature, but are precluded from rendering themselves more miserable, by being cut off in infancy, and never having it in their power to do good or evil themselves.

Answer III. This scheme relieves the difficulties which sometimes have been cast upon the laws or orders of God given the *jewish* nation, to cut off so many thousand children of the *Canaanites* when they entered into the promised land: For hereby these children are subjected only to temporal death as the consequent and penalty of *Adam's* sin, and are, if I may so express it, secured from eternal misery, by being prevented from growing up to imitate the iniquities of their fathers, and to expose themselves to God's eternal judgment and damnation.

If some person should again object, why then may not men slay their own infants or any other children out of kindness, to prevent their growing up to commit actual sins, and exposing themselves to a resurrection and judgment and everlasting misery? I answer, these two ways.

Answer I. Because this is directly contrary to the moral law whereby God hath appointed to govern man, viz. "thou shalt not kill;" and the laws of men, as well as the law of God, almost universally forbid all murder of the human race, and require blood for blood. It is God's prerogative to cut off by death whom he pleases, but he hath not given this prerogative to man, nor will he break in upon the grand rule of his government of this world, so far as to give this piece of sovereignty out of his own hand.

Answer II. Because if men might slay any children at their own pleasure, they might slay some who would have grown up to virtue and religion, and then this infant-murder would cut these children off from future and eternal happiness, which would have been very unjust, and which God will never permit.

Upon the whole it is evident, that the scripture having never in any text that I can find foretold the resurrection or judgment of the infants of sinful parents, and having pronounced the word death only, as the penalty of *Adam's* sin or their interest in it, and denounced the final judgment and eternal misery only against actual sinners; there is abundant reason to believe that God has knowingly and wisely appointed and ordered all these things, so that his providence might be secure from all charges of cruelty and injustice: And perhaps this hypothesis which I have here proposed, is nothing else but these very appointments and transactions of God set in their proper scriptural light to guard his providence from censure.

If I have failed in these attempts, let it be remembered that all the new or peculiar sentiments which are found here, are merely offered to the world as probable conjectures drawn from reason and scripture, to relieve the difficulties which seem to hang on revealed truths. If the method proposed is not sufficient for this purpose, I shall rejoice to see better solutions of them given, and to behold them set in a fairer light. Where I have laboured to follow the track of reason, it hath only been in order to do more abundant honour to divine revelation, to which I intirely submit my faith and practice; and I solemnly renounce whatsoever is inconsistent with it, for that cannot be right reason.

And let us remember also, that if all our attempts of this kind should fail, yet we may rest assured of this, that God is ever wise and righteous and good, that all his transactions with men, how intricate and repugnant soever they may seem to us,  
are



are highly consistent in his own view, and harmonize with all his own perfections: We may be assured that we are sinful and unhappy creatures in ourselves, that there is an all-sufficient salvation provided through *Jesus Christ* the Son of God, and that every one shall certainly be a joyful partaker of it, who follows the appointed methods of divine grace. True repentance and a sincere return to God, with faith in his mercy, so far as it is discovered to men under every dispensation, and a persevering life of holiness in the love of God and our neighbour, shall not fail of being crowned at last with the favour of God and eternal life through the mediation of *Jesus Christ* our Lord: And whatsoever clouds of ignorance and darkness may continue to surround us here, while we are studying the mysteries of grace or providence, yet we shall see things hereafter in a divine light, where all difficulties and darkness shall vanish for ever.

the good rule of his government of this world, to let us see the place of love-  
lation, but he has now given this corrective to man, not will be back in a non-  
regard for blood. It is God's prerogative to cast off by death whom he  
the law of God, and university, and all manner of the human race, and  
would not even man, who is "a creature of blood," and the law of man, as well  
of blood. It is the law of God, the law of the universe, the law of the  
of the other of which one of his blood, to give us that power which is common to all  
and of which we are to a relation and judgment, containing all.

[illegible]

THREE

And for us remember also, that if all our accounts of this kind should be, yet we may not allow of this, that God is ever wise and righteous and good, that all his transactions with men, how infinite and numerous to us they may seem to us, are carried on right reason.

T H R E E  
E S S A Y S

Added by way of

A P P E N D I X :

Wherein are contained

Some plain REPRESENTATIONS of important  
points relating to the foregoing QUESTIONS.

- I. A debate, whether the present miseries of man, when considered alone, and distinct from his sins, will prove his early apostasy from God?
- II. A plain and easy explication of the doctrine of imputed sin and imputed righteousness.
- III. On the guilt and defilement of sin, and how far they may be transferred to others.



# THESE SAYINGS

Added by way of

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# F I R S T E S S A Y.

A debate, whether the present miseries of man alone will  
prove his apostasy from God?

## S E C T I O N I.

*The follies and miseries of mankind in a general survey.*

THE miseries and follies of the creature man have been an ancient and endless subject of declamation among the writers of the heathen world, as well as among christians. A just survey of human nature, from it's entrance into life, till it's retirement from this visible world behind the curtain of death, would furnish us with abundant matter of sorrow and complaint; and we should be ready to say concerning man, "Is this the creature that is so superior to the rest of the inhabitants of this globe, as to require such peculiar care of the creator in forming him? Is this the animal furnished with such transcendent powers of thought and reason, whereby he is said to be exalted above brute-animals? Does he deserve such an illustrious description as *Ovid* gives of him, after he had described the formation of beasts, birds and fishes?"

"Sanctius his animal, mentisque capacious altæ  
Deerat adhuc, & quod dominari in cætera posset,  
Natus homo est. Sive hunc divino semine cretum  
Ille opifex rerum, mundi melioris origo,  
Finxit in effigiem moderantum cuncta deorum:  
Pronaque cum spectent animalia cætera terram  
Os homini sublime dedit, cælumque tueri  
Jussit, & erectos ad sidera tollere vultus."

Thus in english.

"A creature of a more exalted kind,  
Was wanting yet, and then was man design'd;

T t 2

Conscious



Conscious of thought, of more capacious breast,  
 For empire form'd, and fit to rule the rest.  
 Whether with particles of heavenly fire  
 The God of nature did his soul inspire,  
 And borrowing from our earth, on that blest day,  
 Our new-made earth, a better sort of clay,  
 And moulding up the mass in shape like our's,  
 Form'd a bright image of th' all-ruling powers.  
 Whilst all the mute creation downwards bend  
 Their sight, and to their earthy mother tend,  
 Man looks aloft; and with erected eyes  
 Beholds his own hereditary skies."

One would almost imagine this heathen poet had read the account which *Moses* the *jewish* historian gives of the original formation of man, *Gen.* i. 26. "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish, and the fowl, and the cattle." And chapter ii. 7. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."

If man was formed in the image of God, certainly he was a holy and a happy being; but what is there like holiness or happiness now found running through the rank of creatures that is called by the name of MAN? Are there any of the brutal kind that do not more regularly answer the design of their creation, and act more agreeably to their nature, than this illustrious thing MAN, that was made to govern them all? Are there any of the brutes of the land, the water or the air, that we ever find acting so much below their original character as mankind does? And are there any tribes amongst them, through which pain, vexation and misery are so plentifully distributed as among the sons and daughters of the first man?

This globe of earth, if it were to be surveyed by some spirit, some immortal being of the superior regions, and ransacked through all the dimensions and corners of it which are inhabited by our species of creatures, it would be found such a theatre of folly and madness, such a maze of mingled vice and misery, as would move the compassion of his refined nature to a painful degree, and almost sink it into sympathy and sorrow, if it were not tempered and restrained by a clear sight of the just and wise conduct of providence, in permitting all this mischief. But if all these wide and dismal scenes could be grasped in one view, by any mortal of a tender and compassionate make, perhaps it would agonize his better powers into confusion and phrenzy. Should the poets or philosophers form a just idea of it, as far as our common capacities extend, there would be criminal and absurd matter enough to furnish a *Horace* or a *Juvenal* with a thousand jests and sarcasms on their own species, or rather with a thousand full satires. There would be follies enough to shake the lungs of a thousand *Democritus*'s with endless laughter, and there would be miseries enough to raise a fountain of tears for each single *Heracitus*, if such a one had lived in every city of the universe, and in every age of man since the first creation.

## S E C T I O N II.

*A particular view of the miseries of man.*

**B**UT we will lay aside the sins and follies of mankind, and only take his miseries into our present view; let us see whether from them alone we cannot infer, that we are a very degenerate race of beings, with most evident marks of the displeasure of our maker upon us, and under the punishment of the wise and righteous governor of all things\*.

Let us take a turn amongst the historians of the world; and what is almost all history but a description of the wretchedness of mankind, under the mischiefs they bring upon themselves, and the judgments of the great God? The scenes of happiness and peace are very thin set among all the nations, and they have had rather a transient glimpse of these bright scenes here and there appearing and vanishing, than any pretences to durable felicity. Let us spread our thoughts over the universe, what public desolations by plague and famine, by storms and earthquakes, by wars and pestilence, which strike and affect our ears continually: Even the report is terrible. What secret mischiefs reign among men, which pierce into the soul, and corrode the vitals of nature? What smarting wounds and bruises, what lingering diseases attack and torment the animal frame?

Surely those who sustain these maladies would not suppose our great poet had exaggerated matters when he describes them thus, as set before *Adam* our forefather by the angel *Raphael*:

“ A lazarus-house it seem'd wherein were laid  
Numbers of all diseas'd, all maladies  
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms  
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,  
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,  
Intestine stone and ulcer, colic pangs,  
Demoniac phrenzy, mooping melancholy,  
And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,  
Consumption and wide-wasting pestilence,  
Dropries, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.  
Dire was the roasting, deep the groans, despair  
Tended the sick, busy from couch to couch;  
And over them triumphant death his dart  
Shook, but delay'd to strike, though oft invoc'd.”

But lazarus-houses are not the only places whereby we may judge of the numbers of the wretched. Where is the family, if there are seven or eight persons in it, wherein

\* I hope the reader will forgive a short repetition of some of the same thoughts which may be found under the first question in this book; for it was hardly possible to avoid them; especially considering, that these two discourses were written with a distinct view, and were not at first designed to be published in the same book.



wherein there is not one or other of them afflicted with some troublesome malady, or some tiresome weakness or inconvenience? These indeed are often-times wisely concealed by the persons who suffer them, and by the families where they dwell. But these are the miseries which are discovered, in a glaring light, in the hospitals, the infirmaries, and the bedlams, which are provided by the public for the poor: And if we were to walk round a nation, we should find perhaps that in every twenty or thirty households, there were some afflicted and miserable creatures, that would be fit company for these public monuments of unhappiness, if their private circumstances did not extend to make provision for their support and relief; and in the whole, they would be enough to make half a province in a nation, rather than a town or a village.

Let us proceed a little in this enquiry. What toils and hardships, what dangers and deaths, what inward anxieties and sorrows, disappointments and calamities, are diffused and scattered through every age and country of mankind? Do not the rich feel them as well as the poor, and the prince together with the peasant? Are they not all seized with their own restless and tormenting appetites which are never satisfied, but are still returning upon them, and their impetuous passions give them no rest? What keen anguish of mind arises from pride, and envy, and resentment? What tortures and racking disquietudes do disappointments in ambition, or love, and wild jealousy, infuse into the bosoms of the rich, while the poor, together with these same inward vexations and corroding maladies of the mind, sustain also endless drudgeries in procuring their daily and common subsistence? And how are many of them half-starved in their sorry cottages, or fed and nourished at a miserable rate?

Let us survey this sorry creature MAN through every stage: First, mark what a wretched figure he makes at his entrance into life. This animal, says *Pliny*, "who is to govern the rest of creatures round him, how he lies bound hand and foot, all in tears, and begins his life in misery and punishment; and for this only reason, because he is born." Thus, that *roman* author, in his preface to one of his writings.

If we trace the education of the human race, from the cradle to the state of mature age, and especially among the poor, which are the bulk of all nations, the wretchedness of mankind will appear still in a mournful light. How are they dragged up in their tender age in *Europe, Asia, Africa, and America*, through a long train of nonsense, madness, and miseries? What millions of uneasy sensations doth their infancy and childhood endure by reason of those pains and pressing necessities which in their youngest years they can tell only in cries and groans, and which their parents in extreme poverty cannot relieve, or they are so brutish and savage that they will not do it? How wretchedly are these young generations hurried onward through the folly and weakness of childhood, under these miseries, till the addition of new calamities, from their own crimes and madnesses, their ungoverned appetites and passions, swells the load to a huge and painful degree? They practise what they have seen with their fathers, and are plunged into early mischief.

As youth advances, the ferments of the blood rise higher, and the appetites and the passions become much stronger, and give more abundant vexation to the race of mankind, than they do to any of the young brutal creation, whether in air, earth or sea. Their natural appetites are abundantly relieved and satisfied without those vexing cares, anxieties and inconveniencies, which beset mankind of both sexes in the same part of life. The same desires and inclinations which belong to the rest of the

the animal kind, attack the human race also, but with greater rage and violence, and seem to demand their present gratification: And that, as has been observed by moralists, not at one season of the year only, but at all seasons, with more constancy than in other creatures, and give the younger crouds of mankind many more disturbances.

The all-wise God the creator, for just and kind designs and reasons, has limited the gratification of these appetites by rules of virtue and piety: But perhaps these very rules and confinements, however holy, just and good, have served very much through the corruption of our nature, to irritate and provoke mankind to greater excesses, and pursue their vitiated animal inclinations with warmer violence than ever man would have been exposed to in the days of innocence. So the heathen writers confess:

*"Nitimur in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata."*

"We are ever desiring forbidden things, and press after unlawful delights." So St. Paul acknowledges, *Rom. vii. 8.* "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." So a wild young bull or a lion would beat themselves against the grates and restraining bars of their prison, and make more furious assaults there to gain their full freedom. And in the midst of these distracting circumstances of mankind, between the law of God and their own appetites, they lead sometimes but a miserable and most unquiet life.

If their inclinations are gratified in an unlawful manner, what anguish of conscience, what inward vexations and keen reflexions of mind perpetually haunt and torment them! What terrible and pressing temptations assault them to conceal their shame, by the murder of themselves, or the harmless babes to whom they gave birth and life! How shameful and hateful are the scenes of life into which they bring their wretched off-spring? How innumerable and grievous the inconveniences which they entail upon their young spurious descendents? What lasting reproach and distress, with beggary and long sorrow?

On, if they pursue their desires in a lawful manner, how unhappy are the bulk of the extreme poor? And yet how many thousands are there that are but just capable of providing food and raiment for themselves in the world, who, after some conflict with these restless inclinations, rush into the connubial state and misery at once? How unable are they to provide the same necessaries for a young nursery of mortals, a new increasing generation? What endless solitudes, night and day, afflict them in their contrivances to support themselves and their infant-brood? And what a length of years is it before these young helpless creatures can possibly release their parents from this care and anxiety, and are capable of providing food and raiment for themselves? Would the affairs of human life in infancy, childhood, and youth, have ever been constituted in such a sore and painful situation, if man had been such a being as God at first made him; and if he had always stood obedient to his maker, and continued in his favour? Could divine wisdom and goodness admit of these scenes, if there had not been some great and universal degeneracy spread over all the race, which, by the wise and righteous permission of God, exerts itself some way or other in every stage of life?

If we follow this track which mankind treads to the perfection of manhood, the age of public appearance and activity upon the stage of the world, what shall we find there but infinite cares, labours and toil, attended with fond hopes almost always frustrated



frustrated, warm wishes scarce ever fulfilled, endless crosses and disappointments, through ten thousand accidents that are every moment flying across this mortal stage; and whatever their pursuits be, whether honour or wealth, ease or pleasure, some intervening incidents or oppositions blast all their designs, and plunge them into long vexation. As for the poor, who have no such pursuits, but seek their bread from day to day, how does the sultry toil exhaust their lives in summer, and what pinching starving wretchedness do they feel among wintry snows and storms? How is a miserable and distressed life sustained among all the fatigues and pains of nature, the oppression, cruelty and scorn of the rich, and their own inbred maladies both of body and mind, as I said before?

Let us follow on the track of this sorry life, and enter into the scenes of old and decrepid age; how innumerable and how inexpressible are the disasters and sorrows, the groans and aches, the pains and wretchednesses that spring up every where to meet this poor long-lived animal on the borders of the grave, before they plunge him into it?

And indeed is there any person upon earth, high or low, without such distresses and difficulties, such crossing accidents and perplexing cares, such troubles, such painful infirmities, such disquieting fears, anxieties and sorrows, in some or other stage of life, as must pronounce mankind upon the whole a miserable being? Whatsoever scenes of happiness seem to attend him in any shining hour, there is a dark cloud that suddenly casts a gloom over them, and the pleasing vision vanishes as a dream.

And after all these sufferings of real sorrow, and these painted delusions of joy, how constant is the tyranny of death in it's ravages, through our whole race? How formidable and painful are the avenues to his dark dominion? How full of terror and darkness, of thorns and briars, and of extreme anguish, is our descent to the grave? The distresses and miseries of our course through this life, as well as the entrance into it, and the departure out of it, are so numerous and so mournful among all our race, that we can only say, "he is the happiest of men who has the fewest of them." But even the fewest miseries that any man has, if put into an equal balance, perhaps would outweigh all the real and solid comforts of his present life put together, if it were utterly abstracted from all future hopes. And does mankind now look like a creature in favour with his maker? Or has he not rather evident marks upon him of the great displeasure of the God that created him?

Perhaps some will cry out here, in direct opposition to this sentiment, that notwithstanding all these scenes of misery which are opened and spread abroad in the world, yet still the greatest part of men live comfortably enough, and with tolerable satisfaction, according to the condition and rank of their natures on this globe of earth. Are there not a thousand delights and satisfactions still found among mankind in every age and nation? How sweet and relishing are the pleasures of daily food to satisfy appetite, and to repair nature, and all the rich variety of fruits to refresh us, and of drinks to quench our thirst? Is it not sweet sleep that renews our vigour, and gives ease to our weary limbs and spirits? What is the delightful conversation of friends, and the mutual blessings of love and friendship, of advice, comfort and assistance from our natural kindred and our neighbours? Do not these render human life among the bulk of mankind tolerable and easy, if not a chosen and a desirable good?

In answer to this: Let us enquire a little, what are these boasted pleasures which are supposed to recompence the sorrows of life, and give the balance to happiness in this present state? Are they not most of them owing to some previous pain or uneasiness?

uneasiness? It is the pain of hunger and thirst that makes food and drink so relishing: It is the pain of weariness or grief that renders sleep so refreshing. And as for the blessings of love and friendship, among neighbours and kindred, &c. do they not very often, and for the most part, produce as much or more vexing disquietude than they do satisfaction and peace? I mean, they produce these evils, not in and of themselves, and by the original nature of things, but by reason of the endless humours and follies, the errors and passions of sinful fallen mankind, who enjoy and abuse these blessings.

Again, are not a very great part of these pleasures owing to such an indulgence of appetites and sensible satisfactions, which by the corrupt and evil bias of our natures become dangerous and fatal temptations to draw us into guilt and folly, into intemperance and shame, into painful anguish of conscience and bitter self-reflexion? And do not these very pleasures of the body prove the ruin of ten thousand souls? These pleasures might be used indeed with innocence and wisdom; but the unruly and vicious appetites and passions of men turn these sensual delights more frequently into a curse, which God in his original creation designed for blessings: I say, God the creator at first designed them so; but if you take them now with all these unhappy temptations, these powerful and mischievous influences, which by the folly and guilt of man are attached to them, they do not much look like the pleasures provided by a God for his innocent creature man: Scarce can they be called absolutely blessings, unless our natures were better suited to make use of them without such perpetual and prevailing danger and guilt.

Think again, how short and transient are the pleasures of life in comparison of the pains of it? How vanishing the sweetest sensations of delight? And in many families and persons, how long and durable the days, the months, the years of fatigue or pain, or bitter sorrow? How small is the proportion of sensible pleasure to that of trouble, or pain, or uneasiness? And how far is it over-balanced by the maladies, or miseries, the fears or sorrows of life, among the greatest part of mankind?

And as for intellectual pleasures, how very few are there in this world who take satisfaction in them? And among those few how many contentions and quarrels? How many crossing objections, bewildered enquiries, unhappy mistakes and errors, as well as fatigues and vexations, are mingled even with intellectual enjoyments here on earth? "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow," saith the wisest of men; *Eccles. i. 18.* and upon the whole computation he calls it, "vanity and vexation of spirit." chapter ii. 17.

And if we should add to all these evils, this most unhappy circumstance which belongs to every natural man who grows up in this world, viz. the great hazard of his living in sin and rebellion against his maker in the world, and of being sent down to long misery, as a just punishment for it in another; this seems to increase the wretched condition of mankind in this present state to such a degree, that words cannot express it, nor heart conceive. Say now, does mankind, coming into the world in this view, look like an innocent tribe of creatures, or in the original state of favour with their maker?

To talk of solid comfort and satisfaction, and real happiness to be enjoyed in this life, is contrary to all the common sense and experience of almost every thoughtful man who has taken a just survey of these numerous scenes of evil. Sorry satisfaction indeed, and poor comfort in the midst of such superior miseries!

If a man were placed in some upper region, and had the wisdom of an angel, with all that just knowledge and experience what true happiness is, and could look down from above, and take a complete survey of human life, even in it's best cir-



cumstances, as things now stand, and as it is supposed to be enjoyed by some of the happiest men on earth, without the hopes of a better life afterwards, he would be very loth to accept of it; nor indeed would it be worth his acceptance.

Is there an angel in heaven who would not rather chuse to lose his existence at once, than to be sent into our world, and trace the round of twenty or thirty, or threescore years of human life, without any hereafter? And indeed, were it not from a principle of obedience to God, and from the hopes of a happy futurity, after we have piously and honourably sustained the labours, miseries and trials of this life, I know not what wise man would willingly come into these tiresome scenes of mortality, or go through them with any patience.

What? To be trained up from infancy, under so many necessary follies, unavoidable prejudices, and wretched delusions, through the power of flesh and sense? To be sunk into such gross ignorance both of our souls, our better selves, and of the glorious being that made us? To lie under such heavy shades of darkness, such a world of mistakes and errors as are mingled with our little faint glimpses, and low notices of God our creator? What? To be so far distant from God, and endure such a long estrangement and utter absence from the wisest and best of beings, in this foolish and fleshly state, with so few and slender communications with or from him?

What? To be in bondage to so many powerful and disquieting appetites, so many restless and unruly passions, which want the perpetual guard of a jealous eye, and a strong restraint over them, and which will be ever breaking out into some new mischief, notwithstanding our everlasting watchfulness?

What? To be ever surrounded with such sort of dangerous delights of sense, which though they were much safer in the innocent state, yet are now constant and strong temptations to folly, guilt, and misery? To have scarce any joys but what are closely attended with huge dangers? To have no satisfactions but what we are liable to pay dear for by excessive or irregular indulgence, and which are most likely to become the means of transgression and lasting anguish, either to the mind, or the body, or both? Can this be a desirable state for any wise or angelic being, who knows what happiness is, to be joined to such a body as our's, to be united to such a disorderly machine of flesh and blood, with all it's uneasy and unruly ferments?

These which I have now mentioned are indwelling mischiefs, which teize and defile the soul: But there is another train of inbred miseries which affect this sensible nature of our's, this animal frame, with huge agonies and distresses. What wise spirit would willingly put on such flesh and blood as our's is, with all the springs of malady and pain, anguish and disease in it? What? To be in danger continually of the racking, disquietudes of gout and stone, and all the distempers I cited from *Milton's* poem? What? To have nature worn out by slow and long aches and infirmities, and lie lingring for many years on the borders of death before we can find a grave?

And, besides all these inbred evils, to be ever exposed to those innumerable grievances which come from abroad? What? To be ever subject to the common dangers, to the numberless casualties and injuries of nature, to the infinite bruises of the flesh, and mischiefs which attend and afflict this mortal life, and to bear the endless inconveniencies of the changing seasons, frosts and storms, and sultry sun-beams in this elementary world, and which more than half of mankind are exposed to, even with little or no relief? What? To be subject to the frequent insults of injustice, to the frauds of the crafty, the violence of the great, and the reproaches and oppressions of

of evil neighbours, to endure the private bickerings and domestic quarrels of families, the feuds and resentments, and teizing vexations of kindred, with tormenting jealousies and uneasinesses among nearest friends? To be ever disturbed with the hurry, buzz, and confusion of real or pretended men of business, and to lie open to the follies, weaknesses, and impertinences of those we must daily converse with? Add to this the terrors and tears of infancy, the ridiculous humours, the silly vexations, and the real sorrows of childhood, with all the snares and mischiefs that attend our youth, the laborious and uneasy toils of acquiring any knowledge, and fulfilling the necessary employments of life in our young and vigorous years, and the rubbing through long successions and cares, both personal and public, with all the private teizing uneasinesses which arise from family and domestic concerns in a manly state.

Go on with these trains of wretchedness, the grievous occurrences and disasters, the intemperance and succeeding indispositions to which at all ages we are continually liable, the risks and hazards we must sometimes run, both of health, and ease and safety, in procuring the necessaries of life, the constant decays of manly vigour, amidst the infirmities and the aches of old age, the pangs of dissolving nature, and the agonies of death; I say, upon a complete survey of all these hardships which the wisest and best of men cannot escape, I hardly think there is one spirit in heaven, or one man of equal wisdom, if such were found on earth, that would accept of this life in it's common circumstances, or even it's most favourable appearances, if his existence were to terminate at death, and he had no respect or reference to a better life to come.

*Solomon*, that wise prince and philosopher, seems to be much of this mind, when, after a survey of the whole scheme of human life in it's variety of scenes, without the views of hereafter, he declares that "he praised the dead which were already dead, more than the living which are yet alive: Yea, saith he, better is he than both they, even he who hath not been, and hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun. *Eccles. iv. 2, 3* \*." And upon the comparison of things, I must confess my self of *Solomon's* mind; for it appears to me, that the calamities and miseries of life are so numerous, as to over-balance all it's real comforts, and sufficiently shew that mankind, in it's present state, is not it's maker's favourite, but lies under evident marks of his displeasure, on the account of some great and universal degeneracy from the innocence of that state wherein man was first created.

Having drawn this inference from all the foregoing views of human life and circumstances, I would propose here, in their fullest light, the three strongest objections I ever met with, or that I could ever think of, against all these reasonings, and then endeavour to answer them.

### S E C T I O N III.

#### *Answers to objections against this argument.*

I. **T**HE first objection is this: Can mankind in general be called miserable creatures, when there is not one in a hundred of them but uses all his art and skill to preserve himself in this life, and continue his situation? Do not all mankind

U u 2

strive

\* That great man of antiquity *Cicero*, is much of *Solomon's* opinion, when he asserts "humanam conditionem satis per se miseram esse," in his discourse of consolation; and, in the same, he adds also, "non nasci longè optimum, nec in hos scopulos vitæ incidere."



strive to secure their lives, and maintain their abode in this state, with all the supposed miseries of it? Now, must not every man judge for himself, whether he is happy or no? Surely he would not seek to continue his existence in misery: And therefore if the real sorrows of life were greater than the pleasures and satisfactions of it, every man would be glad to be rid of his life, which makes him capable of these sorrows? I answer, in the first place,

Answer I. That wheresoever any thing of a future state of rewards and punishments is known and believed, it is no wonder men are unwilling to die; for they being generally conscious of so much sin and guilt, cannot think themselves to have a certain claim to future happiness; and therefore when they die, they know or fear they must be exposed to the punishment which is prepared for criminals in another world. Their aversion therefore to death, and the fear of it, even though they are in a miserable state, arises not so much from any sense of present happiness, which they are loth to lose, as from a fear or suspicion of taking a dreadful leap in the dark into greater misery.

There are some of our *English* poets who have said very pertinent things on this occasion, and I have read the citations of them on this subject.

“ Distrust and darkness of a future state  
Make poor mankind so fearful of their fate.  
Death in it self is nothing: But we fear  
To be we know not what, we know not where.”

And another thus:

“ Aye; but to die, and go we know not whither;  
——— for this warm body to become  
A kneaded clod, and the delighted spirit  
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside  
In thrilling ice: \* or to be worse than worst  
Of those we fancy howling in long torment;  
This is too horrible. ———  
The weariest and most loathed wordly life  
That pain, age, penury and imprisonment  
Can lay on nature, it is a paradise  
To what we fear of death.”

Again, in another place, the same writer says,

“ If by the sleep of death we could but end  
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd.  
Oh! who could bear the whips and scorns of time,  
Th' oppressors wrongs, the poor man's contumely,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,  
With all the long calamities of life,

When

\* The poet supposes these torments in the future state.

When he himself might his quietus make  
 With a bare bodkin? Who would bear such burdens,  
 And groan and sweat under a weary life,  
 But that the dread of something after death,  
 That undiscover'd country from whose border  
 No traveller returns, puzzles the will,  
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have,  
 Than fly to others which are all unknown?"\*

And it is very evident daily that multitudes would put an end to their own life at once, if they were sure they could put an end to their souls and all their nature, and send themselves into annihilation and nothingness. It is this wise and dreadful guard which the blessed God has set against self-murder, this terrible and eternal curse of hell and damnation, which constrains many miserable creatures to endure the sorrows of this life, and powerfully withholds them from the destruction of themselves. Their many and wilful crimes and innumerable sins of which they are conscious, forbid their hopes of a happy hereafter, and therefore they rather chuse to wear out life under their present and painful burdens, than plunge into an eternity of unknown miseries. It is one of these the poet introduces, crying out pathetically.

"O that the everlasting had not fixt  
 His cannon 'gainst self-murder!"

If you should tell me, the heathens have no knowledge of this heaven or this hell which christianity and the bible acquaints us with, and yet they through many generations are fond of living, and strive to continue long in this life, notwithstanding all the pretended miseries of it; I would cite some of the ancients, as well as modern travellers, to make a reply for me: They would tell us that there is scarce any part of the heathen world, where they have not some notions and fears of punishment in a future state for the sins committed in this life, and particularly in the more polite nations of heathenism, they tell us, how unhappy self-murderers are made in that unseen and future world. When *Virgil* has brought his hero into the world of ghosts, he particularly opens the scene before him,

"Where *Minos* dooms the guilty souls.  
 The next in place and punishment are they,  
 Who prodigally throw their souls away.  
 Fools, who repining at their wretched state,  
 And loathing anxious life have hurried on their fate;  
 With late repentance, now they would retrieve  
 The bodies they forsook, and wish to live;  
 Their pains and poverty desire to bear,  
 To view the light of heav'n, and breathe the vital air:  
 But fate forbids: The *Stygian* floods oppose;  
 And, with nine circling streams, the captive souls inclose."

Thus

\* This author, as we are told by the critics, was as well skilled in describing human nature as any writer whatsoever; and it is only in this view that I have cited his lines.



Thus you see the heathen writer makes this life miserable enough, though he shews their greater wretchedness and misery, who plunge themselves, at their own pleasure into the other world, in order to abolish and fly from the distresses of the present life. But in the second place, I answer:

Answer. II. Suppose this aversion to death, and this love of life to be very universal over all the world, and that without regard to any future state; suppose that all mankind had rather continue in existence, in the midst of all their calamities and plagues, than venture into non-existence, and cease to be; this will not prove that mankind is happy: For the God of nature, for wise ends, hath wrought this love of life into our flesh and blood originally, and mingled it with all animal natures whatsoever, in order to preserve the works of his hands; so that the love of life, or reluctance against dying, is owing to the strong mechanic and animal principles of self-preservation, without any formed and sedate judgment of reason, whether it be best to continue in life or no, or whether this life has more happiness or misery. I answer yet in the third place.

Answer III. That far the greatest part of mankind do not pass a true and just judgement on things, nor wisely balance the right value of them: All their faculties are engrossed, and their spirits, as it were, intoxicated with present sensible things they enjoy, and so they march onward in the rounds of human life, without thinking; and therefore as painful, and as miserable as this state is, yet they cannot tell how to think of parting with it. They bear a thousand calamities rather than venture into non-existence. A club of drunken fellows in a prison, and in chains, who are to be scourged once a-day, yet they are still drinking and dancing and indulging their sport and merriment, thoughtless of the scourge; but can these men be called happy? or will any wise man assent to their judgment of their own state?

Perhaps it may be objected still, that in order to make up the quantity of happiness, and to judge aright of it; we must take in the temper of the person, as well as his circumstances of pain and pleasure. An indolent man may be happy with half the quantity of delights and relishing joys, which his gay and sprightly neighbour requires to his happiness. A hero may be happy under such loads of calamity, as would render a weak and mind miserable. A vulgar and ignorant creature may be happy in the midst of such low and foolish delights, which would disgust the wise, and give them pain. The glutton and the drunkard rejoice in such a happiness as would be scorned and despised by a man of virtue and philosophy. Now if we consider the bulk of mankind of such tempers and tastes as they have, they must be said to be happy, if they enjoy the good they desire, though it be but a sorry good, or rather an evil in the opinion of the wise and rational: And on this account men generally do and will prefer life to death, and their existence here, such as it is, to non-existence, even though there should be no hereafter. In answer to this reply.

Answer. I must grant it in a great degree: but then I say that the common satisfactions and delights of this life, which the bulk of mankind call their happiness, are most of them of so low and degenerate a nature, and many of them so criminal, that it is a sad sign that the intelligent creature man must be fallen from the original excellence of his nature, from his best principles of wisdom, and from the favour of his God, before he can make himself happy in such enjoyments. Let it be called his happiness, if you will have it so, since he chuses it, and is loth to part with it; yet it is such a paltry happiness as no creature of reason would chuse, if he stood in the complete original rectitude of his nature, in the image and the love of his creator, and in the true exercise and vigor of his intellectual

intellectual and reasoning powers. He must have lost these original glories before he can think himself happy in such toys and follies, amidst all the evils and calamities that attend this mortal state

II. The second objection is this: If brutes suffer the same miseries, and yet they have never sinned, how can these miseries prove that man is an apostate or degenerate being? Do not all brute-creatures, the beasts and birds, and the insects of the earth, lie continually subject to the same pains, calamities, accidents, diseases and death, which attend upon mankind? And did their progenitors sin and offend God, or have they themselves offended him? Do not the cow and the hind, and most of the fore-footed mothers bring forth their young with extreme pain? Do not the bear and the lion, and the wolf, howl and roar for want of food, hunt and toil for their prey, and live sometimes in starving circumstances, pinched with keen hunger for whole days together? Is not the horse exposed to almost as many maladies as the man that rides it? And are not the creatures of this species extremely miserable under the wild and mad passions of their drivers? Survey the beasts of draught or of burden, under the furious scourges of the men that use them. What endless lashes they are exposed to, and what rude and pernicious strokes do they bear from any instrument within the reach of their enraged rulers, even while the laborious creatures are straining all their sinews, and even burst their nerves and their eye-balls in tugging at their unreasonable loads at the brow of a hill? And after a little food, whereby nature is refreshed, and a little sleep, wherein life is forgotten, these wretched animals are called again to the team and harness to undergo their daily round of hardships and miseries? And have any of these creatures, or their ancestors, sinned against God? Are not the race of dogs ever snarling, quarrelling and fighting? And surely everlasting brawls and battles are misery enough.

Again, are not the feeble creatures, both wild and tame, subject to the cruel and perpetual ravage of birds and beasts of prey? Do not these animals live by devouring one another, and tearing their flesh from their bones, ere they are quite dead, and this according to the very constitution of their natures? And even the milder fowls, whom seem so innocent and harmless, the partridge and the red-breast, and the chicken, do they not devour millions of insects, as their constant and appointed food? Are not the mangled bodies and limbs of the hare and the sheep, the dove and the thrush, subject to extreme pain, when they are torn and bruised, and half eaten by the tyger and the wolf, the eagle and the hawk? And do not all those milder and gentler creatures occasion millions of painful sensations to the living insects which they prey upon, viz. the ants, and the flies, and the worms? And have any of these sinned against their maker, or degenerated from the first laws of their creation?

Again, I would enquire, are not harmful and bloody accidents much more common among many of the brutes than they are amongst mankind? A horse stalking over an ant-hill shall crush a hundred of the busy inhabitants with his broad and heavy foot, lay a whole kingdom in delolation at once, and leave multitudes of their little members bruised and broken, and the tiny creatures expiring in anguish? And if their organs were strong enough to form a sound which could reach our ears, what shrill outcries and screams, what dying groans, what innumerable accents of misery would arise from this little mangled nation, and pierce the heart of a compassionate traveller on every such accident? And let me ask now, did these diminutive animals, these tiny atoms of being ever offend the hand that formed them? Or  
are



are they in a worse state or condition than they were at first formed? or are they liable to any new accidents which their original nature and constitution does not expose them to?

Yet further let us ask, do not sweeping storms and famine and pestilence sometimes make wretched havock among whole nations of the brutal kind, and spread the fields and the woods with distress and desolation? And in fine, do not the distempers of nature which are found amongst them, or the length of years bring them all down to death, and sometimes with tedious agonies and convulsive pangs? And yet can we say that God is angry with them, or that they are under any worse circumstances of life than what God at first formed them for?

But let us pursue the detail of their miseries yet further. Doth not man destroy thousands of them continually for his own food, and that by divine appointment? Are not birds snared by the fowler in a mortal net, or shot in flocks with murdering gun-powder and engines of spreading destruction? And the rest which escape by flight, how painfully do many of them drag on a lingering life among wounds and bruises? Are not oysters churned alive between our teeth? Are not millions of living shell-fish boiled to death in caldrons, and finny animals in shoals taken out of the sea and rivers, and while leaping with life, they are fryed in burning oil, or other scalding liquids? How many painful circumstances must some of these creatures necessarily pass through, even if we would catch and fit them for our food in the easiest manner? But generally their manner of dying is more painful misery, and death is brought upon multitudes of the brute-creation, merely as they are the appointed support of men and other animals, besides all the other accidents, pains and diseases that attend them.

Now notwithstanding all these miseries which are spread amongst the various brutal tribes in earth, air and water, yet we suppose them still to pass all the days of their existence according to the rank of their beings and the condition of nature which the wise and righteous governor has assigned them. We look upon them all as innocent beings, for they are capable of no sin nor guilt, and therefore all these tortures and agonies which they sustain are no punishments; they having never done any thing to give offence to their maker: and yet, says the objector, you must either allow these brutes to have sinned against their creator, since he appoints or suffers so many calamities to attend them in the very course of nature, or else you must confess that mankind may sustain all the scenes of misery which are before described, without being under any peculiar displeasure of their maker; and man, at least in his infancy and childhood, may be such a creature still as he came out of the hands of God, notwithstanding the vices he learns to practise as he grows up, and all these shapes of wretchedness which he is exposed to, and which are dressed up in this discourse into so formidable a spectacle.

I think I have spread out this objection in it's complete force; and in order to answer it, I ask leave to propose the following considerations.

Consideration I. It has been the opinion of many divines that all these varieties of wretchedness came upon the brutal creation as a general curse for the sin of man, who was the chief inhabitant and lord of this lower world; and therefore these brute-creatures which were, as it were, his slaves, are punished together with him; so that they suppose the sin of man brought misery into all the ranks of this lower creation, as well as into his own kind.

But I must confess I never well approved of this solution of the difficulty; for though I know men may oftentimes, by their perverse wills, abuse these creatures of

God,

God, yet the continual calamities that they fall into by being the natural and appointed food of men and of one another, as well as by unhappy accidents, by injuring, wounding, or killing casualties, by diseases, old age and death, are all ordained of God their creator, as the God of nature, and in the common course of things, without any special reference to the sins of men, as the moral and procuring cause. I can hardly persuade myself that God made so many millions of sensible creatures so miserable, or would permit them to be so, who are in themselves perfectly sinless and innocent, and have no manner of proper relation to any sinful head or stock, such as the first man is justly supposed to be to his own species; of which we have discoursed elsewhere. I proceed therefore to the second consideration.

Consideration II. The scripture on one hand gives us a plain account, that man originally was not made to die, and that the death of mankind was brought in only by sin, *Rom. v. 12.* and all the evils that attend human nature are derived from the same spring; because man was wholly at his first formation in the likeness of God, who made him in the image of his holiness and his happiness, and designed him to live for ever, if he continued innocent. *Gen. i. 26.* and chapter ii. 17. But on the other hand, the scripture teaches us that brutes originally are made to die, and wild beasts made to be taken and destroyed, partly for the natural food of man, and partly for his safety and ease. *Gen. ix. 3. 2 Peter ii. 12.*

Besides, it is evident to reason, and constant observation, that brutes are appointed for food for each other, as flying insects for the spider, small birds for the hawk, and sheep for wolves and lions. Now this cannot be without wounds and bruises, and mortal convulsions, and death. It is manifest therefore, that we may infer guilt from the endless pains, calamities, and death of men, because scripture reveals it, as the original cause; but we cannot infer the same from the sicknesses, wounds and deaths of brute-creatures, which are made by the God of nature for food to others, nor from all the appearances of pain and anguish which are found among the brutal creation: These must be solved therefore, and explained some other way.

Consideration III. The objection here supposes, that all the brutal creation have really the same acute sensations of anguish and pain as mankind, because many of them make use of the same sort of sounds and motions, groanings and howlings, and distortion of limbs, as we do when we are under acute pain. But it is hard to suppose that a righteous and merciful God should inflict such keen and extreme anguish upon millions of creatures whose race and generations are sinless, and perfectly innocent, and intirely such as they came out of his own hands; or that he shou'd, in the course of nature, permit it to be inflicted, without any degree of sin or moral evil in any of them to deserve it.

And I think therefore it would be much more eligible and rational, with some modern philosophers, to suppose that brutes being made of mere matter, have no proper sensations of pleasure or pain; or at least that all their sensations of pain are but feeble and dull, and very imperfect, notwithstanding all their hideous outcries and convulsions of their flesh; I say, it is more rational to think so, than it is to suppose that there is any such sharp agonizing anguish and keen torment as sinful men endure, provided by the blessed God for creatures which are perfectly innocent, and which have no relation to any guilt or crime\*. Will a God

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\* If we were to consult reason and scripture jointly on this head, would they not both incline us to believe, that brutal sensations are not quite the same, nor near so intense as the sensations of mankind? For scripture, as well as reason, teach us, that the very soul and life and supreme principle of action in  
brutes



of infinite equity and goodness inflict so much natural evil where there is no moral evil?

It is probable that the sheep when he receives the mortal wound in his throat, feels as much pain as the swine, though the one is mute and silent, and the other sounds out his death with greivous shrieks and outcries: and perhaps if we had never seen nor heard any creature wounded or dying but a sheep or a fish, or an insect, who are mute, we should never have thought that the brutal sensations of pain were so keen, as those which human nature feels: Therefore if we judge merely by groans and clamours, we must suppose some creatures feel very little or no pain from their wounds and death; and yet why should the blessed God appoint so much less pain for the sheep than for the swine? Nor are the most grievous outcries and contortions of the flesh in other noisy animals a sufficient proof to our reason that they feel such sort of pain, or so intense as man does, and consequently we cannot make the same inference from their sufferings as we do from those of mankind.

Consideration IV. But supposing brutes have sensations of pain as sharp as our's, yet if they have a proportionable and equal quantity of sensations of pleasure through the course of their low life, then put these pains and pleasures of the brutal life into the balance, and the amount of them in the whole makes neither happiness nor misery; or perhaps their pleasing sensations exceed the painful; then they are happy; for misery is only found where the pain exceeds the pleasure in degree, or duration, or both; and that state is happiness, where, upon the whole survey, the pleasure exceeds the pain.

But in mankind it is pretty certain that their natural maladies, as well as the painful and afflictive accidents that attend most or all of them in this foolish and sinful world; far exceed the natural maladies or painful accidents which attend brute-creatures; for amongst them there is little or no intemperance to disorder their own natures; no wars to destroy millions of their fellows; no engines of cruelty and death among them to multiply the miseries of their own species; and upon the whole it is evident enough that the pains and sorrows and evils in almost every human life greatly exceeds the joys or pleasures of it, and consequently render man in this world but a miserable creature.

Consideration V. Let us remember also that brutes have no proper reflexion on things past, but only a sensation of the present: Now man besides all the pains of sense, has also the long and grievous uneasinesses that arise from remorse and anguish of mind, reflecting upon his own evil conduct in time past, and dismal presages and terrifying agonies arising from the constant fear and expectation of what may come; so that as mankind is generally subject to more pains and weaknesses, more diseases and uneasinesses in the body than brute-creatures; so the addition of uneasiness of mind, which arises from a long remembrance of, or reflexion on past sorrows, are as it were, a new sensation of them; and agonies of conscience for past sins, are new misery; besides the terrible forethought and expectation of future evils, whether in this life, or in the world to come, do very much increase the miseries of human

brutes is their blood which goes downward to earth when the brute dies. *Salomon* and *Moses* seem to agree in this sentiment with some later philosophers, *Lev.* xvii. 11, 14. *Ecclesi.* xii. 7. But the soul of man is of a noble original, a thinking spirit proceeding immediately from God, and at death ascending upward, or returning to God who gave it. Now can we suppose that mere blood and flesh have any sensations or perceptions above the capacity of matter? Can they possibly have such intense and keen sensations as a spirit, a mind, a thinking immaterial power, a kin to angels, but united to flesh and blood? Would the all wise and righteous creator form creatures capable of such intense torments, who are not, nor ever were, capable of offending him in the least instance?

nature

nature beyond that of the brutal world, since they are supposed to have no reflexion, no forethought. And it is not only the long and keen passion of remorse and sorrow arising from past sins or moral evils, and of fear and dread from the prospect of future miseries, which makes mankind more unhappy than brutes, who have no such retrospects nor foresights to torment them; but every uneasy passion of human nature, even grief and sorrow for natural evils, wrath, envy, malice, rage, jealousy, disappointment and despair, with all their dreadful train, are more keen and intense in the breast of man, make much deeper impressions on his heart, and sharper incisions into all the tender powers of his nature than brutes ever know or feel: They last also much longer; they dwell upon the spirit for days and months, and years; they mingle with the soul, and imbitter every sweet of life.

Brutal passions, should we allow them to be as strong, yet they are much fewer and more transient: The common calls of nature to eat or sleep, to sport or daily toil, abolishes the painful passion, the ill ferment subsides, the uneasiness vanishes, the cause of it is forgotten, and the creature is soon easy and happy again. But some of these uneasy passions of human nature cleave so close to the soul, that men cannot get rid of them; they sting like an adder, and prey upon the heart like a vulture, they teize the spirit day and night, they take away all appetite to food, and all the sweet relief and power of sleep. Was there ever an instance of a brute-animal whose passions ever wrought out such a scene of miseries for him as the unruly powers of mankind are daily working, and that not in one or two, but in multitudes of the human kind?

Upon all these views I think it must be acknowledged, that the evils which mankind suffer in the present state, are much superior to those of brutes, and consequently as they surmount all the pleasures of human life; so man must be pronounced miserable upon the balance of the whole; and therefore we must infer, that we of the human race cannot be in our maker's esteem a race of guiltless beings, since our portion in general in this life is superior pain and wretchedness; and especially since we find both by reason and scripture, that whatsoever calamities and death attend brutes, these, for wise purposes, are appointed by the God of nature, though they are without sin, while the calamities and death of mankind are expressly attributed to sin in the word of God.

Objection III. If the miseries of all mankind, or even of the biggest part of them in this life, are so great as to over-balance all their comforts, so that a wise spirit would never willingly consent to be dressed in our flesh and blood, and be born into our present world; then we can have no reason to give God our creator any thanks for our existence or life, since this is no blessing, and it would have been far better for us never to have been born. Now is it possible that the great God should make a creature who has not reason or just cause to thank him for his being?

Answer. If any creature who comes into our world, hath more probability of being happy than of being miserable in this life; he has reason to bless God for his existence in proportion to the probability of his happiness: But if a creature has more probability of misery than happiness in life, I cannot see that life is any blessing or privilege; nor can I see how he can rationally bless or give thanks to the great God for it, considered in itself, and abstracted from a future state.

And I add yet further, if any creature who comes into this world has a greater probability of being foolish and sinful here, and miserable hereafter, than he has of being wise and holy here, and happy in the other world; neither then can he with



reason bless God, or give thanks to the author of his being merely for his existence, or coming into life in such a sinful wretched world.

Now since this is the case, that the bulk of mankind are born to trouble and misery here, as *Job* v. 7. and as we have sufficiently shewn before; and if they are also most likely to run into sin and folly in this world, and misery in another, "for almost the whole world lies in wickedness, 1 *John* v. 19. and there are few who shall be saved," *Matt.* vii. 14. this prospect certainly forbids our mere existence or entrance into such a life to be called a blessing; and consequently we cannot reasonably give thanks merely on that account to the almighty being that made us.

There has been indeed a bold and severe charge brought against this opinion, viz. that "it is a very high degree of ungodliness; that it greatly diminishes, if not totally excludes the goodness and mercy of God, and consequently forbids our gratitude, and discourages our hope and trust."

Answer. It is a bold and grievous accusation indeed, but it wants all proof. Our Saviour himself has shewn us that it is certain, "the bulk of mankind walk in the broad way to destruction, and but few find the gate of life," *Matt.* vii. 13, 14. This alone is sufficient ground to maintain a probability of persons in general, who come into this world, being miserable rather than happy: And in this view how can mankind with reason give thanks to their maker for mere existence, which in the present fallen state, exposes us rather to misery than happiness? And the arguments which are used to oppose this opinion are so weak and ill-grounded, that I cheerfully leave them to the sense, reason and conscience of every sincere reader to answer and refute them, though they are made a foundation for several unjust triumphs.

But if the case be so, whence comes this dreadful scene, this dismal situation of things, that an intelligent creature cannot thank God for creating him? Not from God the creator, whose justice and goodness would never have suffered him to have created original beings as they came from his hands in such a situation as this: There must have been some dreadful ancient apostasy from God their creator, some general degeneracy and curse of a broken law or covenant, under the spreading desolation whereof mankind come into this world; nor is there any other way that I can imagine or guess at, whereby the justice and goodness of God the creator can be secured and vindicated from such hard imputations.

And though it is the blessed God that creates or forms fallen mankind from day to day, who come into such a situation and such wretched circumstances, yet it is all according to such an original law of nature or divine constitution made for innocent man, which was holy, just and good in itself. It is true the great God foresees that millions will now be miserable; and notwithstanding all this, his wisdom does not see fit to alter this constitution of things, for reasons which are unknown and unsearchable to us, and which will perhaps continue to be a secret until the great day of judgment. 'Till that time comes we can but form probable conjectures\*. But that great day shall

\* Suppose the great God had placed a man and woman in a certain inaccessible island, wherein there were herbs and roots of many kinds, but no sort of fruit, grain or corn in it: And suppose he had given them a sufficiency of fruits and corn to support them for a year or two, and more, with a special command to sow some of it, and plant immediately, for the support of themselves and their posterity hereafter; and assured them also they should have many children. If this man and woman should eat up all their corn and fruit intirely, even that which they should have sown or planted for their future support; then they and their children in all following years would have been hard put to it to live upon coarse roots dug out of the ground, a poor and scanty supply, and that with much toil and labour: Now would it have been unjust with God to have left them and their children to their constant hard labour and hard fare,

shall reveal all the transactions of God with men, and set them in a glorious light, to the just vindication of all his own perfections, and the silence of all our cavils.

But observe, there are these three considerations which may serve to alleviate and moderate this dismal aspect and situation of things at present.

Consideration I. All mankind are justly required to adore and worship the great and glorious being, whose wisdom and goodness, as well as his power, shine bright in the creation of this world, and in the formation of mankind, as well as all other animals who dwell upon the earth; they ought to admire and praise him on this account, though no reasonable creature can properly give thanks but for some real benefit.

Consideration II. Every man who comes into this world, as considered in our common head and representative *Adam*, in his state of innocence and trial, with full power to obey his maker's law, and with far superior motives to obedience, hath good reason, even as *Adam* our father had, to thank God for his existence; for he was made in such circumstances, under *Adam* his head, which carried in them a much greater probability of standing and being happy, than of falling and being miserable.

Consideration III. Though the greatest part of mankind may not have sufficient reason to give thanks to God for their mere existence in this fallen state, yet all the sons and daughters of *Adam* have reason to praise the divine goodness for many favours they receive, viz. that they are not so miserable as they might have been by reason of their sins and follies, that they have any special satisfactions or comforts in life, and any lesser degrees of pain or sorrow than others sustain, or any relief for their own maladies and troubles: And especially if they are born and educated in a nation where the light of the gospel shines, they have further reason to acknowledge and bless the distinguishing goodness of their creator, who has placed them within the nearer and easier reach of happiness, if their own evil inclinations and obstinacy do not withhold them from seeking after it. And,

Consideration IV. When any of the race of mankind are made sensible of their sins and misery, and by repentance and faith in the grace of God, so far as it is revealed to them, have arrived at any tolerable hopes of their interest in his favour, and their acceptance unto life and happiness in another world, then they are called aloud to bless their divine Creator, as well as their Saviour, and to give thanks to the God of nature and grace together. And I think there is not one place in scripture where man is required to give thanks to the Lord but on one or other of these accounts which I have here mentioned §.

Upon

fare, without giving them any new corn or fruit to plant or sow, or without providing better food for them? And suppose their children also neglected to cultivate and multiply the best roots they could find, and several of them in every age fell into diseases and died by the badness or scarcity of their provisions; would the creator lie under an imputation of injustice for continuing their existence under these disadvantages, and thus punishing their original rebellion and their daily negligence?

And suppose further, that this solitary and inaccessible island lay in the midst of many other islands in the sea, whose inhabitants are continually informed by some revelation or divine messenger of the original state and the present circumstances of this unhappy country, in order to restrain the rest from disobedience to their maker and Lord in similar instances of any kind: might we not say, here is a just and valuable reason for which God should continue this island of rebels under their punishment? This may be applied in some measure to the forlorn case of mankind on this globe of earth, when compared with the many other planetary worlds, who may be preserved in their duty by being informed of our sad circumstances, though we know little of their's. But as I hinted before, these are but mere conjectural thoughts: It is only God himself in the great day of judgment can answer every difficulty, and scatter every darkness from all his works of providence.

§ There is no plain text that I can find where mankind is commanded or invited to thank God merely for their existence; and in those places where all nations, or all the earth are called upon to bless the Lord,

and



Upon the whole, the result of things is this, that if any of us cannot upon rational grounds give thanks to God as our Creator for our existence, it is owing merely to our original apostasy from God in and by our first parents; for otherwise God would never have made intelligent creatures, who could not reasonably thank him for making them.

And then further I add, if we cannot rationally thank God for our creation here, until we have some hope of his favour and grace hereafter, this should awaken us all with utmost diligence in the midst of our miseries to enquire after the way of salvation, and pursue every appointed duty that is necessary for this end: For then we shall be able to bless God for bringing us into being, and we shall no longer lie under such a sad and dismal reproach of nature, as not to give thanks for our existence to the hand that formed us.

Thus far I have endeavoured to prove, that by the miseries of mankind we may have sufficient evidence that they are in a fallen and degenerate state.

#### S E C T I O N IV.

*A full proof of man's apostasy by scripture and reason, derived from their sinfulness.*

**B**UT after all, if it should be found upon the justest survey and balance of things, that the miseries of human nature considered alone, are not a sufficient and satisfactory evidence of the apostasy and fall of mankind from their maker's favour, and of some remarkable displeasure of the hand that created them; yet I am well assured that the early corrupt inclinations, the endless iniquities and crimes of men from their childhood, and that universal propensity to sin which is found among all the inhabitants of our world, joined with the loads of misery they sustain, are both together an effectual and convincing argument that we are a degenerate and fallen race of creatures.

Now that we are such a sort of criminal, guilty, sinful, and degenerate beings, and wretchedly forsaken of God who made us, or fallen under his heavy displeasure even from the beginning of life, will evidently appear both from the express witness of scripture concerning our sinfulness, from the necessity of renewing grace, and from the light of nature surveying the heathen world.

First, there are many representations in scripture of some universal degeneracy and corruption that has come upon all the sons and daughters of *Adam*, and which have been largely supported by many writers who have explained these texts, viz. *Gen.* vi. 5. "Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart of man is only evil continually;" and chapter viii. 21, it is added, "that it is evil from his youth." *Psal.* xiv. 3. "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God: They are all gone aside; there is none that doth good; no, not one." *Eccles.* vii. 20. "There is not a just man upon the earth who doth good and sinneth not." *Isai.* liii. 6. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way. Different wanderings, but all are wanderers." *Rom.* iii. 10, 12. "There is none righteous; no, not one: There

and give thanks to him, it is still in view of their having the knowledge and grace or salvation of God manifested in them.

There is none that doth good; no, not one." verse 19. "Every mouth is stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." And verse 23. "All are fallen short of the glory of God, because all have sinned\*." 2 Cor. v. 14. "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead," that is, spiritually dead in trespasses and sins.

Now can we suppose that God would create such a world of beings, that every one of them coming out of his own hands in their original purity and innocence, should so universally break his law, run into sin and spiritual death, and naturally incline to practices which tend to defile and destroy themselves, and that without any one exception, if it had not arisen from some root of bitterness, some original iniquity, which diffused itself through all of them from their very birth or entrance into this world? Surely this universal corruption would incline any person to believe, either that God had not given to each of his creatures in their original formation a full and practical sufficiency to answer the demands of his law, and to preserve themselves from iniquity and guilt, or that it was lost in some hand or other. It is a strange and incredible thing to suppose that every single person among the millions of mankind should be born innocent and pure, with sufficient and practical powers of all kinds to fulfil the law of God and their duty, and that they should yet, by free and voluntary choice, every one for himself, for near six thousand years together, break his holy law, and rebel against him that made them, if there were not some original and universal contagion spread through them all at their entrance into life. See Quest. I. Section VII. at the end.

Secondly, I argue the same point from the scriptural doctrine of our recovery by divine grace. Let us consider in what manner the scripture represents the necessity of a great and divine change to be made upon the souls of all men, in order to their recovery from the ruins of their nature, and to obtain the favour and image of God, and future happiness. *John* iii. 3. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God:" And in other scriptures it is represented that "they must be born of the

\* If St. Paul had not used such strong expressions here, as plainly include every individual of mankind, yet his argument requires this sense; for otherwise there would be some who would not want the salvation of Christ; whereas it is his great design to prove, that all men are condemned by the law, and stand in need of this salvation, without any exception at all.

Objection. Some have asserted this law, which requires perfect obedience, and which condemns the sinner to death, to have been abrogated as soon as Adam sinned, and that another covenant, even the covenant of grace was substituted and introduced, even before the sentence of death was pronounced upon Adam.

Answer. This objection has been often and effectually refuted; and it is very easy to shew, that that law by which all mankind are bound under condemnation, can never be said to be abrogated, while it holds men, or binds them under guilt and death: "It is that law which now brings indignation and wrath upon every soul that does amiss." *Rom.* ii. 9. "That law which is written in the heart of man by nature." verse 15. "The same law which whosoever offends in one point, is guilty of all." *Jam.* ii. 10. "That law by which is the knowledge of sin, and by which no flesh shall be justified, for all have broken it." *Rom.* iii. 19, 20, 23. "It is that law which curseth every one who continueth not in all things there required, and from whose curse Christ hath redeemed the gentiles as well as the Jews." *Gal.* iii. 10, 11, 13. This is the original law of works.

And though all mankind may be said perhaps to be under the covenant of grace in those general proposals of repentance and trust in the divine mercy, which are made to fallen men by their own reasonings, or by divine revelation, yet none are freed from the curse and condemnation of the original broken law, but those who have accepted of this covenant of grace by sincere repentance and faith or trust in the mercy of God. Now this is but a very small part of mankind, for there are few that shall be saved. And till this covenant of grace is thus accepted, every son and daughter of Adam, of mature years, are condemned as actual sinners by this law. This law therefore stands in full force against all, besides sincere penitents, and such as are justified by the gospel.



the Spirit," verses 6, 8. "They must be born of God." *John* i. 13. "They must be created anew in *Christ Jesus* unto good works." *Ephes.* ii. 10. "They must be quickened, or be raised again from their death in trespasses and sins." *Ephes.* ii. 5. "They must be renewed in their Spirit, or created after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness." *Ephes.* iv. 23, 24. "They must be reconciled to God by *Jesus Christ*." *2 Cor.* v. 18, 19. "They must be washed from their sins in his blood." *1 Cor.* vi. 11. *Rev.* i. 5. "And since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, therefore if ever they are saved, they must be justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in *Christ Jesus*, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." *Rom.* iii. 23—25. Now can any one suppose that God has made such a world of creatures as have come into being from *Adam's* time to our's, which have all entered into this world, pure, holy, and innocent in their original state, and yet that there should not one of them retain his image in holiness, nor be fit for his favour and the blessings of his love, without being born again, being new-created, being raised from the dead, being redeemed by the blood of his own Son, and being washed in so precious and divine a laver? Do not all these representations make it appear highly reasonable to conclude, that every man is born into this world with some original contagion about him, or under some early degeneracy and guilt, and criminal imputation in the sight of God? Is it not a most incredible thing that not one among all the millions of these creatures should be fit to be made partakers of his favour, without such amazing purifications as require the blood of the Son of God, and the almighty operations of his blessed Spirit to redeem, and to new-create them, if they were born in their original purity? Do not all these things effectually teach us that mankind in their present generations even from their birth are not such creatures as God first made them?

But without entering into these arguments from scripture, which represent the wretchedness of all mankind; I think we may evidently prove, in the third place,

III. That far the greatest part of the world are born under some sort of degenerate and guilty circumstances by a mere survey of the heathen nations with the eye of reason, and by the light of nature.

A few days ago I was taking a view of the map of the world, and measuring with my eye the breadth and extent of the nations. I took a spreading survey of the vast *asiatic* empires of *Tartary* and *China*, and a great part of the kingdom of *Mogul*, with the multitude of islands in the *East-Indies*; I went on to survey the large brutal countries of all the southern part of *Africa*, with the savage nations of the *american* world. I observed the thousands or rather millions of mankind who dwell on this globe, and walk and trifle, and live and die there under the heaviest cloud of ignorance and darkness, who know not the true God, nor the way to his favour, who are drenched in gross impieties and superstitions, who are continually guilty of national immoralities, and practise idolatry, malice and lewdness, fraud and falsehood, with scarce any regret or restraint.

Then sighing within myself I said, It is not many years since these were all infants, wretched helpless infants, without any knowledge of the things of God or man. The inhabitants of whole regions have been born and brought up under parents who know not the true God, nor are acquainted with the path that leads to life and happiness. Are not these unhappy children, said I, formed and born under difficulties almost unsurmountable? Are they not laid almost under a moral impossibility of breaking their way of themselves, through so much darkness and error, to the knowledge, the fear, and the love of him who made them? Dreadful truth indeed;

deed; but so far as I can see, it seems to be certain and uncontestable! Such, I fear, is the case of those of human race, who at present cover a great part of this earthly globe, with very few exceptions.

Then I ran back in my thoughts four or five thousand years, and said within myself, what multitudes in every age of the world have been born in these deplorable circumstances in the midst of idolatry and profaneness, sin and death? They are inured from their birth to barbarous customs and impious practices: They have an image of the life of brutes and devils wrought in them by their early education: They have had the seeds of many immoralities and wretched wickedness sown and planted, and cultivated in them by the rude and savage instructions of those who went before them; and their own imitation of such horrible examples has confirmed this mischief long before they knew or heard of the being of the true God, or the discoveries of his will, or their duty: And perhaps they have never heard it to this day. Scarce any of them have admitted of one thoughtful inquiry, whether they follow the rules of reason, or whether they are in the way of happiness and peace, any more than their parents before them; and as they are born in this gross darkness, they grow up through all the stages of life to practise these vile idolatries, and all the shameful abominations of their country, and they go on to death in the same course: Nor have they light enough from without to make them plainly see their own folly and danger, nor have they had any probable workings of judgment or conscience within them strong enough to awaken them effectually to ask, "Is there not a lie in my right hand? Am I not in the way of sin and destruction?"

Then after a length of years in such impieties and madness, such ignorance of the true God and universal wickedness, they are plunged into the invisible world at death, without any evident or reasonable hope of divine favour in the other world, or at least at the utmost peril of his displeasure, and a dark and dismal uncertainty of the circumstances of that state into which they are delivered at the hour of death or the resurrection.

St. Paul confirms all that I have said, who, by his long and frequent visits and sojournings among the heathen nations, well knew their temper and state, and he represents them to us, as a most abominable herd of creatures, in several of his epistles. *Rom. i. 21—31.* Even the wise and the learned among them, the *Greeks* and the *Romans*, "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the image of birds, beasts, and creeping things, and worshipped the creature more than the creator. Their foolish heart was darkened: They were justly abandoned of God, and given up to work all uncleanness with greediness: They were filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, malice, &c. They were back-biters, haters of God, without understanding, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." In *Eph. iv. 18.* "They were alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts." In *Colos. i. 21.* "They were alienated from God, and enemies in their minds by wicked works."

It is true, we are told that there was so much of the law of God written in their hearts, that their consciences bore witness to it, in some instances, and their thoughts excused or accused them," *Rom. ii. 14, 15.* But we seldom read of the return of any of them to sincere repentance of their wickedness, by the reproofs of conscience. St. John tells his disciples, that "though they are of God, yet the whole world lies in wickedness," *1 John v. 19.* And St. Paul again assures us, "that those who have sinned without any express knowledge or revelation of a law, shall perish with-



out law.\* Doubtless their consciences, in the great day of judgment, will accuse them abundantly, and join with the sentence of God the judge in condemning them, and will hardly be able to make just excuses for any of them; and therefore they are represented "as without God, without *Christ*, and without hope in the world." *Eph. ii. 12.* A dismal and deplorable state!

St. Peter says indeed, "that God is no respecter of persons, that is, whether *jews* or gentiles; but, in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, shall be accepted of him: *Acts x. 34, 35.* But if there were very few among the *jews*, who feared God, and wrought righteousness, very few that shall be saved, as our Saviour saith," *Matth. vii. 14.* If there are very few in these learned nations of the gentiles, that feared God or loved him, how much fewer may we suppose to find in the more barbarous countries, which have no knowledge of God nor godliness\*?

What kind and gracious allowances the blessed God will make at last for such unhappy creatures, he has not revealed to us in his word.

Now, upon this survey of things, I cannot but enquire, would this have been the case of mankind in these wide and unhappy nations? Would these have been the wretched circumstances both of their young offspring and their advancing years, in a hundred long successions, if they had been such a race of creatures as they came out of the hand of their creator, harmless and innocent? If the children had been esteemed, in the eye of God, as such undefiled, holy, and guiltless beings as some men are ready to imagine, could this have been their portion? In short, can we suppose, that the wise and righteous, and merciful creator of the world, would have established and continued such a constitution for the propagation of mankind, which should naturally have led so many millions of them so early into such dismal circumstances and temptations of almost unavoidable iniquity? Or would the blessed God have ever thus treated whole nations of infants, who are the work of his hands, if there had not been some dreadful and universal degeneracy spread over them and their fathers, by some original crime, and which even met and seized them at their entrance into mortal life, according to some just and ancient constitution? And what constitution can this be, but the original covenant with *Adam* in innocence, and the spreading consequences of his sin?

But as I have insisted upon several of these things at large, under some of the first questions in this treatise, I chuse not to repeat them here; but I will only stay to answer three or four general objections.

Objection I. It is a most unreasonable and unrighteous thing, to impute the sin of one person to another, and to make the children and posterity of a sinner suffer any of the punishments which were due to the father's sin; therefore the righteous and holy God has never appointed any such constitution, nor can he do it.

Answer. It is evident that death was the punishment threatened to man for sin, while he stood in innocence, to deter him from it: It is evident again from other scriptures, that death is the actual wages or punishment of sin: It is plain also from  
universal

\* Though the case stands thus with the heathen world, yet there are, and there must be some grounds for a sufficient vindication of the equity and goodness of God, notwithstanding these scenes of wickedness and destruction among men: This has been made to appear, in some measure, by several writers, and particularly in the third and fourth conferences of a book, intitled, "the strength and weakness of human reason." See volume the second, pages 279—316. And what the reasonings of men cannot fully solve and vindicate now, the great God will explain hereafter, and maintain the equity of his own conduct, to the conviction of all his intelligent creatures, men and angels. Amen.

universal experience, that death passes upon all men, even upon children, and a thousand other miseries of life attend them; and it is granted by many of those writers who oppose our doctrine, that these miseries and death come upon children by the means of the sin of their first father. Now I could never yet learn any fair and justifiable account, how such sickness and pain, misery and death should come upon all mankind by means of the sin of Adam, if it be not in some sense imputed to them, even in the sense in which I have explained it in the "second essay." Let those writers give a fair and rational account, how this can come to pass but by such a constitution as I have represented.

It is not enough to say, that the just and righteous God appointed or even permitted it, in order to bring about greater glory to himself, and greater blessedness to mankind by the gospel of Christ, unless every one of those who suffer on the account of Adam's sin are made partakers of this greater blessedness, the contrary whereof is sufficiently evident.

Objection II. The common doctrine of original sin inherent, which supposes every man and woman to be born with sinful qualities, vilifies and pours great contempt on human nature, &c. If we act upon this principle, we shall rather hate than love one another.

Answer I. A depression of human nature under a due and deep sense of such universal sin and misery, is the first step towards our recovery by the grace of God and the gospel. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven," or the blessedness of the gospel. *Math. v. 3.* "There were many who professed christianity in *Laodicea*, knew not that they were wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," therefore they did not seriously apply to Christ to be made partakers of his blessings. *Rev. iii. 17.* It is from a "knowledge of our sin and misery by the law, that we come to seek after the salvation of grace," *Rom. iii. 19, 24.* And I am persuaded that it is the pride and self-sufficiency of men not acknowledging their folly, wretchedness and ruin, that is one of the chief hinderances to the acceptance of the grace of Christ.

Answer II. It is yet more unreasonable to suppose, that the acknowledgment of this universal wretchedness of mankind should incline us to hate one another; are we not rather led hereby to pity each other under our common frailties and miseries? And is not this pity the first proper expression of love to the miserable?

Objection III. There can be no man born with principles of sin or sinful qualities, unless God be made the author of sin, because God who makes the nature of every man, makes all his qualities also. Nor could such a constitution of nature be a righteous constitution, which continues the propagation of every child with sinful principles in him, for it is the same thing as if God infused sin into them, and therefore there is no such constitution.

Answer. Hath not a wise and good God, considered as creator, ordained such a constitution of nature, whereby the most monstrous births are brought into the world by sinful mixtures, if mankind abuse themselves with brutes? And may not the great God be good and wise even in this constitution? Cannot a God of equity and goodness appoint such a course of nature among fallen mankind, whereby a drunkard or a lewd person may produce a child bearing the vicious qualities of the parent, or the miserable effects of the parent's sins? And yet the order of nature may be wise and righteous. Is not madness propagated through whole families, and sometimes in



several successions, by the fixed constitution of the God of nature, without God's own infusing madness into the brain or blood? Has not God appointed a seed to bring forth a plant? But if the seed be any way corrupted, it may by the divine appointment of the course of nature bring forth a corrupt tree. Is it God that infuses all these evil and corrupt qualities into men or plants, because his appointed order of nature, or his sovereign interposing will, does not hinder and prevent them?

It is a very needless thing to tell us that known truth, that the "course of nature separate from the agency of God, is no cause, or is nothing;" for this piece of instruction in metaphysical science, abates not the force of my argument.

Objection IV. The notion of deriving a sinful nature from *Adam*, runs foul upon this rock, that God doth not make or create the nature of every man who cometh into the world, because God cannot make a thing that is sinful?

Answer. Suppose, God is constantly producing by the sun, air, and rain, the harvest of the field according to his great law of vegetation; but if some person should sprinkle the seed-corn with a poisonous juice which might infect every grain, the seed might produce corn of a mortal quality. Now if it be asked, Did God make this harvest of corn? The answer is, yes: But did he make this corn poisonous? No, by no means. Now in these conceptions there is no difficulty or danger of mistake. But if men have a mind to be captious, they may spend whole pages in cavilling. The plain case is this, God the creator makes the nature of every man by his original and almighty order of creation or propagation: But it was *Adam* brought sin into the nature, and made it sinful.

There are some other objections which have been raised against this doctrine, viz. "If original sin be natural, it is unavoidable, then it is necessary, then it cannot be culpable," &c. But all of this kind, with many others, are sufficiently answered, not only in the late "vindication of the scripture doctrine of original sin," but in many smaller papers which Mr. *Hebden* of *Suffolk* has lately published on this occasion, as well as in many other excellent writers ancient and modern. Yet it is evident that some of the opposers of truth find it a more easy and a more pleasant thing to repeat with assurance what they have said themselves, than to take due notice of what their fathers, or their neighbours have answered.

THE

# T H E S E C O N D E S S A Y. O R,

A plain explication of the doctrine of imputed sin and  
imputed righteousness.

**T**HE doctrine of the imputation of sin and righteousness hath been attended with many noisy controversies in the christian world: And though these things may be frequently met with in common life, and that without any controversy, yet they seem to have created such difficulties in religion, as are hard to be compromised. Let us make one more attempt and try, whether these notions and expressions may not be set in so fair and easy a light, by tracing out the plainest ideas of them in the common affairs of mankind, that when they are applied to religious subjects and texts of scripture, it may vanquish these difficulties, and reconcile the sentiments of several contesting parties in christianity.

When a man has broken any of the laws of his country, and is actually fined or imprisoned, or put to public shame or death, or is condemned to fines or imprisonments, to the pillory or the gallows, it is plain that "sin is imputed to him, his wickedness is upon him, and he bears his iniquity;" that is, he is accounted or reputed a criminal by the court of justice, and he is condemned or dealt with as an offender, he is made liable to, or obliged to bear the punishment, or he is actually punished.

On the other hand, if a righteous or innocent man is falsely accused of any crime, and he is acquitted by the court, then "sin is not imputed to him" by that court, or he is not condemned, "but righteousness is imputed to him," or he is reputed and pronounced righteous, and dealt with as an innocent or as a righteous man; or, in another scripture-phrafe, "his righteousness is upon him."

Or if a reward be either assigned or actually given to a man according to the law upon the account of any righteous or good action he has done, this act of virtue or goodness is imputed to him, and his righteousness is upon him, he is dealt with as a righteous and deserving person, the reward of righteousness is given him.

If a man has been guilty of a crime which deserves capital punishment, but the punishment is remitted by the mercy of the prince upon his repentance, at the intercession of some nobleman, and he is entirely pardoned, then "sin is not imputed to him, he is justified from that crime, and righteousness is imputed to him" by the free favour of the prince, that is, he is not condemned but absolved; he is not liable to punishment.



punishment now, but he has a right to impunity and life, or he is dealt with as a righteous person, or as though he had not transgressed.

~~Or suppose a man has been guilty of treason, and his estate is taken away from him, and from his children for ever, then the "sin of the father is not imputed to the father only, but to the children also, that is, they bear the iniquity of their father, his punishment is laid upon them," they suffer for their father's sin or crime, and that in their following generations even to late posterity; they are exposed to poverty and hardships for the treason of their ancestor, and his sin is imputed to them as well as to him.~~

If the crime of which a man is guilty be murder of the innocent, and the criminal forfeits his life and estate by the sentence of the law, and his children become beggars and vagabonds, then the blood of the innocent man is said to be upon the murderer, and upon his children, because they also suffer for their father's crime. When the jews imprecate the guilt of the blood of *Christ* which they shed, to be imputed to them, and punished on them, and their children, this is their language, *Matth. xxvii. 25.* "His blood be on us and on our children."

Or if we should suppose some criminal to have incurred the penalty of imprisonment, banishment, or scourging, and the laws of the state should permit a friend of his to become his surety, and to suffer these penalties in his room, then the crime is said to "be imputed to the surety, or to be laid upon him, he bears the iniquity" of the criminal; he stands liable to the penalty, and actually suffers for the sin of another man: And thus the crime is not imputed to the original offender, but upon his submission to his prince, and trusting in his mercy, he is entirely acquitted, and dealt with as an innocent or righteous man: then righteousness is imputed to him, though his crime was imputed to his kind surety, when he suffered for it; and the sufferings of the surety are imputed to the criminal, when he is absolved or acquitted on that account.

And if we should suppose the prince, or the laws of the land, to permit this kind friend or surety to exert himself in some eminent act of obedience or service to which a reward is promised; and all this to procure some further favour for the criminal, and to intitle him to the promised reward, then this act of eminent service may be said to be imputed to the original criminal, that is, he is rewarded on the account of it: so that upon the whole, the criminal comes to have not only a freedom from guilt, and a right to impunity, but a right also to the reward, in virtue of what his kind friend and surety has suffered and done for him. The criminal is both pardoned, justified and rewarded for the sake of what his friend has done or suffered, and his friend's doings as well as his sufferings may be said to be imputed to him.

Or if any man practise obedience and righteousness in an eminent or illustrious manner, and he together with his posterity are dignified and rewarded on the account of that eminent obedience, then this obedience and righteousness of the father is imputed to the children, his righteousness is upon them; that is, they are dignified and dealt with as though they had been eminently righteous and obedient, upon the account of what their father was and did.

Now, if among the histories of the nations we have any transactions of this kind recorded by ancient writers, do we not easily understand what these writers say? Is not their meaning very plain and intelligible? Should we stand debating with long chicanery and cavilling, by rules of grammar, logic and politics, whether such things were possible or no? Is not the sense easy to a common reader?

reader? Then why should we think these same sort of things and phrases, in matters of religion, are so dark and so difficult, as to need huge comments and quarrelsome folio's to explain them? Why should we not agree in the plain meaning of them, when we meet with any such phrases among the sacred writers? And when we find such representations made to us in the things that relate to God and man, sin and righteousness, in the books that teach us the way to salvation, why should we not receive them in their plain common sense, without contending about them?

The chief difficulty in adjusting our common ideas in any of these cases seems to me to be this: How can the particular acts of the treason of the parent be imputed to a child, especially in it's infancy, though it is granted that he suffers banishment and poverty for the sake of his father's treason; I say, How can these particular criminal actions be imputed to him, since this infant was never capable of committing these acts of treason, they being quite out of the reach of a child, and impossible for him to commit?

Or how can those eminent and illustrious acts of obedience or righteousness which were performed by a father, be imputed to a child, if that child never stood either under a direct obligation, nor had any capacity to preform those very actions and services?

To these enquiries, I make these two plain answers.

Answer I. Those acts of treason, or acts of service, by very plain and common forms and figures of speech, are said to be imputed to the children, or to be upon them, when they suffer or enjoy the obvious and legal consequences of their father's treasons, or of their eminent services taken in the gross and comprehensive view of them, as they are criminal or meritorious; though the particular actions and circumstances of those treasons, or of those services, could never have been practised by the children, at least in their minority. This would give no difficulty at all to the reader, who should peruse these human histories, and read such narratives in them: And why should it give us any difficulty when we read this divine account of things in the holy writings, or in human discourses on divine subjects?

I answer also in the second place,

Answer II. The words sin and righteousness may be taken in common authors, as I shall shew presently they are often taken in scripture, in these two senses.

Sin or iniquity signifies either the particular acts of disobedience to a law, or it signifies the legal result of those disobedient acts, that is, the guilt or the liableness to condemnation, and obligation to bear punishment which arises from those acts of disobedience according to the law.

And thus when we say the sin or iniquity of the father is imputed to the children of a traitor, who never were nor could be precisely in their father's situation or circumstances, we do not mean that every single evil act of the father is charged upon the child, as if the child had done it; but that the guilt or liableness to punishment which arises from those acts of the father is so far transferred or imputed to the child, that the child suffers banishment or poverty for the sake of it: and this according to the law and custom of nations is esteemed just and righteous.

In like manner righteousness has two senses: It either signifies the particular acts of obedience to any law or command of a superior, or it signifies the result of those actions, that is, a right to impunity, a freedom from punishment, and a right to.



to life, or liberty, or honour, or any reward which belonged by the law to such acts of obedience.

And so when we say "the righteousness of the father is imputed to the child of a person" who has performed some eminent act of service or obedience, we do not mean that all those special acts and circumstances of the father's service or obedience are minutely and particularly imputed to the child; but the general result of those acts, that is, the rectitude in court, or the right to impunity and reward, which is the result of the father's performances, is imputed to the child.

Now if we would but try to explain every text of scripture wherein either imputed sin or imputed righteousness are mentioned in the word of God, either in express words, or in the plain sense and meaning of them, I am persuaded we should find them all easy and intelligible, and free from cavils and controversies.

If we met with such narratives in common history as I have suggested, surely we should not expect that the writer should express himself in such a nice accuracy of learned and scholastic language, as men of modern controversy are almost constrained to use, in order to guard their expressions against all possible cavil and objection. Nor should we enter into such a detail of critical and perplexing debates about every punctilio both of word and sense in this history, as is too often done when we read these things in scripture, as relating to *Adam* and *Christ*. And since the holy scriptures were written for the common use of mankind, and their general meaning is obvious and plain, why should we rack every syllable, and put every expression to the torture to make it confess what we have a mind to have it speak according to the different parties under which we list ourselves.

If we consider that account which scripture gives us of all mankind falling under sin, and the legal or penal consequences thereof by the sin of *Adam*; or if we consider *Christ*'s taking upon him the sins of men, bearing their sins, and suffering for them as a surety or sacrifice; or if we consider righteousness imputed to those that believe, or even the righteousness or obedience of *Christ* imputed to penitents and believers; I think we should find no great difficulty to adjust our ideas of these things, if we would but suffer ourselves to form our sentiments of these matters by the plain, natural and common expressions and ideas of men about these subjects, and in a candid manner receive the obvious meaning of such language.

In order to confirm what I have said, I desire to make these three remarks.

Remark I. That there are several such histories in the bible, wherein instances of the like kinds among the transactions of men are delivered down to us in such sort of expressions or words of the same import.

*Abraham*'s eminent obedience to God in bringing his son *Isaac* to the altar, was rewarded, not only in blessings to *Abraham* himself, but to his seed. *Gen.* xxii. 16—18. "Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice." Here it may be said, that *Abraham*'s obedience, at least in the result and consequences of it, is imputed to his seed.

This same promise is repeated again to *Isaac*, and assigned to his posterity, for the sake of *Abraham*'s eminent piety and obedience. *Gen.* xxvi. 4, 5. "I will perform the oath that I swore unto *Abraham* thy father, and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and I will give unto thy seed all these countries, because that *Abraham* obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my sta-  
tutes

tures and my laws." *Abraham's* righteousness was thus imputed to *Isaac* and his seed.

*Phinebas* the son of *Eleazar* was "zealous for the Lord among the children of *Israel*, and God gave him and his seed after him the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God," and slew the criminals in *Israel*. *Numb.* xxv. 11. This eminent act of righteousness was so far imputed to his children, as that they received the reward of it as well as himself.

*Achan* who had stolen the silver and the rich garment and the wedge of gold from among the spoils of *Jericho*, provoked the Lord to anger; and his crime, by the appointment of God, was so far imputed to his children, that they were all stoned for the sake of his crime. The guilt or punishment of it was imputed to the children together with the father, *Josb.* vii. 24.

The falsehood and covetousness of *Gebazi* were imputed to his posterity. *2 Kings* v. 25. When God by the mouth of his prophet pronounced that leprosy should cleave unto him, and to his seed for ever."

Many other instances of this kind might be collected from the sacred writings, to shew us how persons may not only have their own sin, or their own righteousness imputed to them in the punishments or the rewards they receive; but other persons also may have that sin or righteousness imputed to them; that is, they may fall under condemnation and punishment, or have a right to impunity and reward by a wise and holy constitution of God, upon the account of the crime or obedience of their forefathers.

Note, It is not my business and design in this place to justify at large the conduct of providence in these instances, but only to represent the actual facts or matter of history, and shew how very easy and intelligible these sort of representations are, and that they would afford no difficulty to a reader, nor occasion any controversy about the sense of them, if we came with honest minds to read them, and not under any former prejudices or bias.

Remark II. It is pretty evident that the scriptures of the old and new testament use the words "sin and iniquity," חטא or חטאת and עון and ἁμαρτία both in the *hebrew* and *greek* languages, to signify not only the criminal actions themselves, but also sometimes they signify the legal result and consequences of these actions, that is, the guilt or liability to punishment, and sometimes the punishment itself, whether it fall upon the original criminal, or upon others for his sake, and on his account.

In the same manner the scripture uses the word righteousness, צדק or צדקה and δικαιοσύνη, to signify, that right to impunity, that rectitude in court, that justification, or being pronounced righteous, or that right to reward, which is the result of those particular acts of piety and obedience, as well as to signify the particular acts of obedience or piety themselves. If this has not been sufficiently shewn already by writers in this controversy, a moderate study of some of those texts where these words are used, will convince us of it.

I might give a short specimen of it in a few scriptures. *Job* xxxiii. 26. "God will render to a man his righteousness," that is, not the very righteous actions, but the proper result of them, or those blessings which are the fruits of righteousness. *Psal.* xxiv. 5. "He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation," that is, the reward of righteousness. *Hosea* x. 12. "Sow to your selves in righteousness," that is, in and by actions of piety and goodness; "till the Lord come and rain righteousness upon you," that is, till he pour down on you the rewards or fruits of piety.



I might add here, that in several places of St. Paul's epistles, the word "righteousness" is used to signify justification in the passive sense of the word, or a justified state, a rectitude in court, or a right to impunity and life. *Rom. x. 3.* "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" which must mean that Christ is the great design or accomplishment of the law of God, in order to the justification of believers, or to their obtaining a right to life. *Rom. x. 10.* "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness," that is, to obtain justification, or a justified state. *Gal. ii. 23.* "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain;" that is, if a justified state, or a right to life came by the law, &c. And particularly where the word λογίζομαι, or "impute," is joined with "righteousness," as *Rom. iv. 3.* *Gal. iii. 6.* "Abraham believed God, and it was counted or imputed to him for righteousness." *Rom. iv. 5.* "His faith is counted for righteousness;" it is not *ἀπὸ* or *ὑπὲρ*, that is, for and instead of righteous works, but *ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης*, that is, in order to justification, or acceptance with God.

And so in other places of scripture, a work whether good or evil, is put for the reward of it. *Job xxxiv. 11.* "The work of a man will he render unto him;" that is, the recompence or fruit of his work: So the word "iniquity" is used to signify the punishment of it. *Hos. xii. 13.* "Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity;" that is, the punishment that it deserves. So Paul desires *Philemon* to impute any wrong he had received from *Onesimus* to himself, *Philem. verse 18.* Not the evil action, but the damage he sustained.

And upon this account when sin or righteousness are said to be imputed to any man upon the account of the works of righteousness or sin which he himself has done; then these words perhaps may sometimes denote the good or evil actions themselves, together with the legal result of them in guilt and condemnation, or the legal rectitude in absolution and justification. But when the sinful or righteous actions of one person are so imputed to another as to bring punishments or rewards upon that other, then generally the words "imputed sin and righteousness" signify the legal and forensic result of these sinful or righteous actions, that is, an obligation or a liability to punishment on one side, or a right to impunity, and the reward on the other.

It may be granted indeed, if one man commit murder, and three or four other men contrived or encouraged, aided or abetted the murderer in the commission of the crime, perhaps the action of murder, as well as the legal penalties of it, may be in a sense imputed to all these men, because they are all actual sharers in the fact: But this is not the case in these scriptural imputations we are speaking of, therefore it is only guilt or penalty that is imputed or transferred.

Some person may be ready to enquire,

First. How can the guilt of sin or the condemnation for it be justly imputed or transferred from one man to another, without the imputation of the sinful actions themselves? Or how can the legal rectitude, that is, the right to impunity and life, or the righteousness of one be imputed to another, without the righteous actions themselves being imputed? To this I answer,

Answer. The very same just constitution or law, whether human or divine, by which the actions themselves, whether good or evil, could be supposed to be imputed, is sufficient for the imputation of the legal result of those actions, and that with as much justice. Nay, I might add, with much more justice in many cases, may the legal result or punishment of sinful actions be imputed to others, or transferred to them than the actions themselves: For the imputation of the evil actions to an innocent person, if it could be done, would carry more of crime and blame, and shame, and of personal defilement and demerit in it, than the mere imputation of

of their guilt, that is, a liableness to condemnation and punishment. And indeed when the punishment is transferred to others, then the sin or guilt is said to be imputed to them, as I have shewn before.

Secondly, It will be objected, may not the very same sinful actions of the father be imputed to the posterity, since the children were in the father naturally when he committed those sins? "Is not *Levi* said to pay tithes in *Abraham*, *Heb. vii. 9.* because he was yet in the loins of his great grandfather, when he paid tithes to *Melchisedek*?"

Answer I. The apostle expresses it not as a matter of strict reasoning, because he adds the words, "as I may say so," to intimate, it is rather an allusion or emblem, than strict reasoning.

Answer II. If there could be supposed any advantage by this natural inbeing of all men in *Adam* to support the imputation of his sin to them, yet there can be no necessity of it, for *Christ* was not naturally in us, though our sins were imputed to him. This imputation of sin therefore to the one or the other signifies only the transferring the guilt, condemnation or punishment, and not the imputation of the same evil actions, or the transferring them from *Adam* to us, or from us to our blessed Saviour.

Thirdly, A third argument to prove the good or evil actions themselves imputed, as some suppose, may arise from the strong expressions of scripture, especially in *Rom. v. 19.* where there is so particular a comparison between our being made or "constituted sinners by the disobedience of *Adam*, and our being made or constituted righteous by the obedience of *Christ*." To this I answer,

Answer. That the *jewish* and all the eastern writers deal in very strong figures and expressions to signify plain and obvious things; and therefore there is some allowance to be made in the explication of them, or when we reduce them to plain language. And besides, as *Adam* was the head and spring not only of our guilt and death by imputation, but of our inherent sin by natural propagation also; so *Christ* was the head and spring not only of our justification and life by his imputed righteousness, but of our inherent holiness or righteousness by sanctification: And perhaps the strength of the expressions might be used to intimate all this to us.

But if only the result of their good or evil actions were imputed to us, those strong expressions might be used. I am sure when "all the iniquities of the children of *Israel* and all their transgressions in all their sins, are confessed over the head of the goat, while *Aaron* lays both his hands upon it, and he is said to put or transfer them all upon the head of the goat, and that the goat should bear upon him all their iniquities into the wilderness, or a land of separation," *Lev. xvi. 21.* All these words can signify nothing more than transferring to the goat the guilt or condemnation or liableness to punishment, misery and death, which these sins deserved, and to which the goat might be exposed; for a brute creature cannot have human sins any otherwise imputed or transferred to it: the particular sinful actions of man cannot be transferred to the brutal sacrifice in any other sense: Nor do I see a necessity of any other sense in which the sin of *Adam* was imputed to his posterity, or the sins of men to the Son of God\*.

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\* Let what will be said to confine the sense of this imputation of sin or righteousness to the legal or forensic result of good or evil actions; let what will be said to exclude and deny the imputation of the actions themselves to others; yet those who oppose this doctrine will and do level almost all their arguments against the imputation of the actions themselves, and then triumph in having demolished what we never built, and in refuting what we never asserted or maintained. Nor do I know any other reason for this their conduct, but that while they put such senses upon our words as we disclaim, they can glory in their own fancied victories; but where the truth or integrity of it lies, I know not.



If one would keep our ideas of these things as clear and distinct as possible, I think we may do it by virtue of this distinction, or this two-fold sense of the words sin and righteousness.

Fourthly, It is possible some may in the fourth place object that it cannot properly be called imputed righteousness, if the righteous actions themselves are not imputed; for in proper speech the result of *Christ's* righteousness, that is, the right to impunity and eternal life which he procured for us, is given to us rather than imputed.

Answer. To this I answer and grant, that this is the very language of scripture: It is called "the gift of righteousness, *Rom. v. 17.* and eternal life, which is the result of *Christ's* righteousness, is the gift of God through *Jesus Christ.*" *Rom. vi. 23.* "And the forgiveness of sins is given to *Israel.*" *Acts v. 31.* Yet let it be observed also, that the very reward itself is sometimes said to be reckoned or imputed in scripture. *Rom. iv. 4.* The word is λογίζεσθαι, which our translators have construed "imputed" in the next verse. But this leads me to the next remark.

Remark III. The scripture does not, as I remember, any where in express words assert, "that the sin of *Adam* is imputed to his children, or that the sins of mankind, or of believers were imputed to *Christ*, or that the righteousness of *Christ* is imputed to believers;" yet still I think the sense and true meaning of all these expressions is sufficiently found in several places of scripture.

If we consult the language of the prophets *Isaiab*, and *Jeremy*, and *Daniel*, and the apostles *John*, and *Paul*, and *Peter*, in their representation of some of these subjects, *Isa. liii. 4—12.* and *Jer. xxiii. 6.* and *xxxiii. 16.* *Dan. ix. 24.* *Rom. v. 12—19.* *1 Cor. xv. 3, 21, 22.* *Gal. iii. 13.* *2 Cor. v. 21.* *Ephes. i. 7.* and *ii. 5, 13.* *Phil. iii. 9.* *Col. i. 14, 20.* *Heb. ix. 14, 26.* *1 Pet. ii. 24.* and *iii. 18.* *1 John i. 7.* and *ii. 2.* and *iv. 10.* and *Revel. i. 5.* and *v. 9.* and many other scriptures, we shall find the substance and true sense of these phrases as I have explained them.

Yet since these express words and phrases of the "imputation of *Adam's* sin to us, of our sins to *Christ*, or of *Christ's* righteousness to us," are not plainly written in scripture, we should not impose these very expressions on every christian; let every one take their liberty in manifesting their sense of these plain scriptural doctrines in such words and phrases of their own, as are modest and secure from offence and danger, or confine themselves to scripture-language.

But if these words were expressly written in the bible, they could not reasonably be interpreted to any other sense, than that which I have explained in and by so many examples, both in the scripture-history and in common life. Let us make this appear in a few instances.

When we say, "The sin of *Adam* is imputed to all his posterity," can we possibly mean that every evil motion of *Adam's* eye or his heart towards the forbidden fruit, with every thought of unbelief of the threatening, or every working of ingratitude toward God in his mind, or pride in his heart, together with the action of eating this fruit at his wife's request, is minutely and particularly imputed to all his infant-seed? Can these criminal thoughts be imputed to them who never were under any temptation or capacity of tasting that fruit, or of breaking that particular law of God? Must we not necessarily therefore mean, that it is the guilt of *Adam* in that sin, or his liableness to condemnation and punishment, to misery and death, is imputed or transferred to his posterity? "Imputation of sin" in this case signifies the "imputation or transferring of the legal or penal consequences of sin;" that is, misery and death.

When

When the sins of *David*, and of *Mary Magdalen*, and *Rahab*, and of all the adulterers, the harlots, and the murderers that ever repented and believed on *Christ*, are said in general to be imputed to *Christ*, is it proper to explain it by saying all the particular lustful thoughts, with every adulterous wish, and every impious and bloody purpose in their hearts, together with all the lewd and vile actions both of men and women, are in themselves imputed, reckoned, or transferred to the pure and holy *Jesus*, when he was made a sacrifice for their sins? Can *Christ* be counted or reputed as the lewd or bloody transgressor? Can any thing else therefore be meant by such an expression of *Magdalen's*, or of *David's* sins imputed to *Christ*, than that the guilt or liableness to punishment, which is the legal result of their crimes, was laid upon *Christ* when he bore all their sins in his body on the cursed tree?

Let it be considered, that if all their sinful actions could be and were imputed to *Christ*, which are only and properly personal, I cannot well see how to avoid the imputation of the vitiosity and sinfulness and dreadful demerit of all these actions to *Christ*, together with the actions themselves, and thus the defilement of their sins in every bad sense of it, will be transferred and imputed to the blessed *Jesus*, the holy one of God, which I fear would too nearly border upon the language of blasphemy.

It is evident indeed in many places of scripture, that our "sins were imputed to our blessed Saviour, when *Christ* bore the sins of many, when he was made sin for us;" that is, a sin-offering, when the "Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all, when the Lord pleased to bruise him, and put him to grief, and made his soul an offering for sin:" But I think it can never mean any more than this, that he was made a proper sacrifice of atonement or expiation for those sins, by bearing sorrows and punishments, and death upon that account, which were the legal result of our sins, in order to deliver us from them.\*

So when we say, "the righteousness of *Christ* is imputed to believers," I think it can never mean that every particular righteous action of *Christ*, as he was a holy observer of the *jewish* law, a preacher of the gospel, a master of a family, or a worker of miracles, can be imputed to women or children, who were never called to any such office, or to perform these actions; nor can his suffering of circumcision, or his celebration of *jewish* festivals in the temple, among the males of the house of *Israel*, be minutely and particularly imputed to gentile christians, both male and female, who never were under the command of circumcision, or who would have sinned in practising *jewish* ceremonies: And therefore the "righteousness of *Christ*, when it is said to be imputed to believers," can mean no more than that the legal result of his righteous acts, or acts of obedience to God, is imputed to them, or bestowed upon them. This "gift of righteousness" therefore, is a right to impunity, a legal rectitude in the court of God, an absolution from sin and punishment, a pardon of sin and justification in the sight of God, and a right to eternal life, which are conferred upon them for the sake of what *Christ* has done and suffered.

And indeed for this reason I have sometimes scrupled to use this language, though some very good writers have used it, viz. that the merits of *Christ*, or his satisfaction, are imputed to us. The satisfaction of *Christ* is the recompense which he made to God for our breach of his law: His merit in it's most natural sense signifies his proper desert and worthiness of all those divine honours and blessings which were

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\* If any one will doubt whether in scripture the sins of one person are ever imputed to another, or born by another, in the sense declared, let him read even doctor *Whitby* himself in his exposition on 1 Pet. ii. 24, 25. where I think any man may find satisfaction in this point, how "*Christ* bore our sins in his own body on the tree."



his own personal rewards, as well as of that pardon of sin and eternal life which he obtained for us: And this merit and satisfaction arises from the transcendent value and dignity of the person of *Christ*. Surely this satisfaction cannot be imputed to us properly, lest we should be said to have satisfied, and made God a recompense for our sins. His merit cannot be imputed to us in a strict sense, for that would make us meriters, either of such peculiar glories as he had, or at least of our own pardon of sin and eternal life.

But if we sink the sense of the word merit so as to mean nothing but those blessings of pardon, grace, and eternal life which *Christ* has merited for us, or rather the legal right of true believers to those blessings, according to the covenant of grace; then the phrase of his merits imputed, may be used without offence or error.

Here let me make these two reflexions.

Reflexion I. It is the explaining this doctrine of imputed sin and imputed righteousness, so as to include all the particular acts of sin and righteousness, with their proper merit or demerit, &c. that has tempted so many persons to deny the doctrine itself.

Reflexion II. If it should be allowed that the very act of *Adam's* disobedience was imputed to all his posterity; if the very same sinful actions of men could be imputed to *Christ*; if the very actions of *Christ's* obedience and righteousness could be imputed to believers, what greater punishments could the one justly and reasonably suffer? Or what blessings could the other reasonably be intitled to, or enjoy, according to scriptural representations of things, beyond what scripture has assigned, either to mankind as the result of the sin of *Adam*, or to *Christ* as the result of the sins of men, or to believers as the result of the righteousness of *Christ*?

Upon the whole, I conclude, the imputation of *Adam's* first sin to his offspring, the imputation of our sins to *Christ*, and imputation of his righteousness to us, which are so often used by our protestant divines, may be very well understood in a scriptural sense, or a sense much favoured by scripture, according to the common ideas and notions which people have of one person's suffering for the sins or crimes of another, or one person's receiving special benefits for the good deeds of another, as appears in the beginning of this essay, without running into needless cavils or controversies, into improper language, and dangerous extremes.

And in general, I may make this just inference: If we would but allow the expressions of scripture, or the plain and obvious sense and meaning of those expressions the same candour of interpretation as we allow to all men who write of civil or historical subjects in the like cases, and not cavil at them in common writings, we might sufficiently enter into the sense and meaning of God in his word, and find a greater uniformity in our sentiments: And we should also abound more in charity and love towards each other, if any lesser difficulties and darkness should remain upon our minds, and should lead us to some differences of opinion and expression about these subjects.

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T H E  
T H I R D E S S A Y.

V I Z.

On the guilt and defilement of sin, and how far they may be transferred to others.

**I**N order to clear the doctrine of imputed sin from all further difficulties, it may be proper to enter into a disquisition of the true sense of those words, viz. "sin, "guilt, and defilement,\*" which are frequently made use of in scripture, and in the common language of christians: Let us try to clear them from all ambiguity, by setting the several distinct senses in which they are used in a perspicuous light.

Sin is the most general name for all manner of moral evil, and in it's general or abstract nature, or rather the sinfulness of it, is "want of conformity to the law of God in the things which that law requires, or the transgression of that law in those things which it forbids;" and thus it includes both the sins of omission and sins of commission.

Again, Sin is to be considered as it is a principle or habit in the mind, which inclines us to break the law of God; or as it appears in the actions of life, which are actual transgressions or violations of this law.

Yet further, there are two things to be considered in sin, viz. the real and the relative evil of it.

First, The real evil of sin consists in it's hurtful nature and evil qualities, whether it be considered in the habits of the mind, or in the actions of life. Let us survey them both briefly.

The real evil of sin is that disorder in the habits, or principles, or powers of the soul, which inclines it to act contrary to the holy nature, perfections and image of God, as well as against his law. It is a disorder also in these very actions, as they are contrary to the nature of God, defacing his image, spoiling the soul's original rectitude.

\* Though the abstract substantives guilt and defilement are not much used in scripture in our translation, yet I presume none will be so weak as to object against my representation of them as scripture-language, since their conjugates or derivatives, "guilty, guiltiness, guiltless, defile, defiled," &c. are frequently used.



rectitude, breaking the true order of things, and destroying the truest happiness of man\*.

This disorder in the soul, or it's principles of action, is called in scripture, "lust, concupiscence, corruption, sin that dwells in us, the body of death, the flesh, the carnal mind, the law of sin, and the law in the members." The same disorder in the actions of life makes them be called "sins, abominations, iniquity, wickedness, evil works or ways," &c.

I add yet further, sin considered as a real evil, and a disorder of heart and life, hath it's natural effects and consequences following it, such as pain or anguish of conscience, self-vexation, shame, &c.

Secondly, Let us consider the relative evil of sin. This consists more particularly in it's respect to the governing authority and law of God; it is a contrariety to the precepts of that law, partly in the very principles and habits of the soul, as well as in the actions of life†.

But as this relative evil chiefly belongs to sinful actions, it is more properly an actual opposition to, or violation of God's righteous law, and so it subjects the sinner to the punishment which that law threatens‡.

The terms of "unrighteousness, disobedience, trespass and transgression" are sometimes applied to this relative evil of sin in the actions of life in scripture, or more properly it is called guilt, or guiltiness before God, and it signifies our liability to punishment because of sin.

As the real evil of sin hath it's natural effects and consequences on the sinner; so the punishment which the law threatens may be called the legal consequence of sin, and includes pain, misery, or death inflicted upon sinners.

Again, as the relative evil of sin is removed by pardon through the atonement of Christ, so the real evil of it is removed by sanctification by the holy Spirit. The first changes our condemned state into reconciliation with God; the last changes our sinful nature and temper into the image of God and holiness.

Perhaps some person may object against this scheme, and say, all the evil that is in sin is relative, for the mere natural action abstracted from all it's relations hath no real evil in it; therefore this distribution of the relative and real evil of sin is not just and proper. I answer,

Answer. Sin considered as a bad principle in the soul, or as a bad action in life, is indeed a real evil, for it hath many positive evil qualities and natural evil effects, which all mankind know and feel, and which are too many to be reckoned up; but the abstract idea of sin, or rather the sinfulness of any action, is granted to be relative, because it consists in a want of conformity to the law of God.

I grant also that sin may in some sense be called a relative evil, because it bears a contrariety to the image of God, as well as it consists in a contrariety to the law of God. Yet since sin in the heart or in the life, in habit or in act, is a real bad quality, and is contrary to the image of God, and naturally tends to ruin a soul by destroying

\* As virtue and holiness are the true rectitude and order of the human soul, when all it's powers are in proper subjection to God, and harmony with each other; so sin is properly the disorder of it, when the inferior powers of appetite and affection rebel against the superior and guiding powers of reason and conscience, and the will and passions are not kept in their due obedience to the creator.

† The apostle John describes it thus, 1 John iii. 4. ἡ ἀνομία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀρεμία, "sin is unlawfulness," which our translators have called the "transgression of the law."

‡ I say, the relative evil of sin belongs chiefly to sinful actions, rather than to the habits and principles of sin in the soul, because I take the evil inclinations of the heart prompting us to act contrary to the law of God, to be part of the real evil of sin: And besides I do not remember the word guilt, which is the proper relative evil of sin, is ever in scripture ascribed to the habit or principle of sin without the act.

stroying it's good qualities, it's holy rectitude or holiness, it's peace and happiness, as well as legally by subjecting it to punishment; I chuse to call that disorder which hath such a real and natural tendency to spoil God's image and our happiness, the real evil of sin: and I would call it's demerit or desert of death, or it's legal subjection of us to punishment, the relative evil: And I desire leave to do so at present, that I may not admit confusion into this discourse, and may prevent all contention about words.

The general term sin in scripture is frequently used to signify sometimes the relative, and sometimes the real evil of it. It is used promiscuously and indifferently in the old testament and in the new, both for the sinful disorder of our hearts and lives, and also for the demerit or punishment of some sinful action. It is used for the opposition that is in sin to the holy nature of God, and to the soul's real happiness, as well as for the opposition of it to the law of God, and it's subjecting us to the legal penalty.

Now let us consider what is the guilt of sin, and what is it's defilement, and distinguish them as far as scripture and common speech admits.

First, we will enquire into the meaning of the guilt of sin; and this will afford us the following observations.

Observation I. The words "guilt" and "guilty," in their original and most proper sense, denote the relation of a sinful action or person to some law, and the obligation which the sinner lies under to make satisfaction to the law, by suffering some penalty. The *english* word is supposed to be derived from the *saxon* word "gild" a tax or fine; and "gildan" is a person obliged, or liable to make amends, or pay for a fault committed.

In the learned languages it hath the same sense. "Reus" and "reatus" in *latin*, and *νομος* and *νομν* in the *greek*, seem to be entirely confined in their significations to the relation or situation in which the sinner stands with regard to the law, and represent a person bound to answer for a fault or transgression of the law.

So our guilt or guiltiness before God, originally and properly denotes the relative evil of sin, or it's transgression of the law, and the sinner's obligation to make amends for it by suffering some penalty.

Observation II. It must be granted that the word guilt by some writers has been distinguished into these two senses, viz. there is a guilt of the fault, which is called "reatus culpæ," and there is a guilt of the punishment, which is usually termed "reatus poenæ." And thus the term guilt or guiltiness, is applied to a person three ways. Sometimes it signifies his having done the crime, or the sinful action, as when we say a man is guilty of blasphemy, that is, he blasphemed: Sometimes it denotes his demerit or desert of the punishment threatened, and at other times it means only the legal subjection of a person to punishment thereby; as when we say, the blasphemer is guilty of death, we mean he has deserved it, or at least he is liable to it.

Observation III. Observe also, that by using this word in these three distinct senses, we are led sometimes to mingle and unite all these senses in one; and so in the word guilt we sometimes include some idea of the actual fault or crime, and the personal demerit of the sinner, as well as it's legal subjection of him to punishment; yet it is not always used in all these senses, but always in one or other of them.

Observation IV. Observe further, that we never say a man is guilty of the fault, but when he is the actual personal sinner, and has deserved the punishment: But he may be said to bear the guilt of sin, or have the guilt laid on him, when he is made



liable or subject to the punishment by the imputation of sin to him, according to any righteous compact or constitution, though he be not the personal or actual sinner, nor has merited punishment himself.

Observation V. When we speak of the guilt of conscience, or a guilty conscience, it means that sensible grief, or anguish of soul, which arises from a painful consciousness or remembrance of our having committed sin against God and his law; and so it includes in it not only the fear and terror of the punishing justice of God, which is a legal consequent of sin, but also the shame that arises from our having done amiss, and from our unfitness to appear before a God of holiness under that sinful disorder, which is a natural consequent or effect of sin. This guilt of conscience belongs only to the personal offender, and can never be transferred by imputation to another.

But in the main, I think we may determine, that this word, the guilt of sin, or of a sinful action, as it was originally designed, so is much more frequently, and more obviously used and understood concerning the legal consequent of that sin, or it's just subjection of the sinner to punishment, which is it's relative evil, than it is concerning the disorder of the sinful action, or the real evil of it. And indeed this is the only thing in sin which can be transferred and imputed to any other person, that is, the obligation to suffer the penalty, or to make amends for the violation of the law.

In the following part of this discourse therefore, when I use the word guilt, I desire to be understood chiefly, or only, concerning that liability, obligation, or subjection to punishment under which sin may bring any man, whether it be actually and personally committed by himself, or whether it be transferred to him only by imputation. The use of words in different senses, and as including different ideas, has been often an unhappy spring of confusion and mistake, which we should avoid as much as we can, by confining words to a particular sense\*.

Now

\* Here let it be observed, that languages are at first formed by the bulk of mankind, who have not any great solicitude to secure the sense of each word, and confine it to one proper idea: and when different ideas approach near to one another, the same word is often used by them for two or three ideas, especially since mankind hath many more ideas than there are words in any language whatsoever to represent or signify them. And hereby it happens, that ideas running into one another by so near an approximation, the words that signify them, though they might be at first different, yet by degrees they run into one another's meaning, and bring much confusion into our conception of things. The words guilt, sin, demerit, are instances of this.

Let it be added also, that the figurative and metaphorical way of speaking is introduced into any language, by endeavouring to describe spiritual ideas by some resemblance to sensible and corporeal things: And though this may give a brightness and force, beauty and sensibility to the expression, where the ideas are perfectly known, yet it is too often in danger of introducing some mistake and error into the minds of those who afterward heard and read it. The words filth and pollution, &c. will evidence this.

If you ask, why this sort of language, with it's various defects and dangers of mistake, is made use of by the sacred writers in scripture, the answer is obvious: The scripture was written for the bulk of mankind, who are not called to enter into accuracies and nice puntilio's, and therefore it must speak their language, that it may be the better understood by them, how imperfect and ambiguous soever it may happen to be. And besides, as the use of figures and metaphors brightens and aggrandizes the things they represent, so the holy writers saw it necessary to represent their important ideas in the brightest and strongest images, and figures, and sensibilities, to strike the minds of the people with their great importance. And this was the custom also of eastern writers.

Therefore in explaining the scriptures, as well as other writings, in a clear and distinct manner, if we would speak more exactly and accurately concerning things, and guard against every mistake in a

critical

Now let us consider what is the filth or defilement of sin.

The filthiness, pollution, or defilement of sin, which is so frequently mentioned in scripture, is not any third thing really distinct from the two forementioned evils of sin, viz. the guilt of it, and the disorderly nature of it, that is, the relative and the real evil: Defilement is only a metaphor used by the Spirit of God sometimes to express one of these, viz. the legal guilt, but much more frequently to signify the other, viz. the criminal disorder; even as the word sin itself is used to denote both the relative and the real evil of it, viz. the legal guilt, and the moral or criminal disorder.

The words defilement and pollution, are mere figures borrowed from things of the body, and applied to the soul, which is a spirit, and which in a strict and proper sense cannot be defiled. A body is said to be defiled, when it has something of a baser nature mingled with it or cast upon it, or when a body is so tainted and corrupted, that it becomes offensive to our senses: and this bodily filth many times is removed by passing through the water, or through the fire, whereby the body attains it's primitive purity either in whole or in part. Now because there are some things in sin which are it's proper evils, that bear a resemblance to bodily defilements, therefore the same word is metaphorically applied to the sins of the soul.

But since it is but a metaphor, a figure, or impropriety of speech, it must have something literal and proper which is signified thereby: Now all that I know of, that can be called the proper evil of sin, is either relative or real, and consists either in the guilt, or in the disorder of it. I have no idea or conception of any thing different from these two, when I use the word defilement or pollution: And we must not abuse ourselves with scripture-metaphors and figurative words, instead of real ideas, nor persuade ourselves into a fancy of more realities than there are or can be in nature. This would be to dishonour scripture instead of explaining of it.

If I were to prove that these are the two only ideas in which we find the terms of filthiness, defilement, or pollution, used in scripture, or in our best writers on sacred subjects, I might confirm it these three ways.

I. If we consider the effects which are represented to flow from the defilement of sin, they are all such as may be attributed either to the guilt or to the disorder of it.

1. The holy scripture and our divines represent the filth or defilement of sin, as that which makes us offensive to God, as any corporeal defiled thing is offensive to ourselves. Now it is the guilt of sin that makes us offensive to the divine justice, for that is the attribute that vindicates the honour of his law, and executes the penalty upon those that have broken it, and are become guilty. And it is the disorderly nature of sin, whether in our hearts, or in our actions, that makes us offensive to the divine holiness; for sin in this sense is a contrariety to his holy nature, to all his moral perfections, his complete rectitude, his goodness, and his truth: It is in this sense, "God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," *Hab. i. 13.* He will not let those come into his presence with ap-  

A a a 2

probation

critical and distinct explication of them, we should endeavour to keep the same ideas to the same words as far as ever we can; and having distinguished the different senses in which a word hath been used, we should confine, as far as possible, one word to one meaning, or idea only.



probation, whose hearts or lives are defiled, that is, under sinful disorders. This was typified by the levitical pollutions of old, when some bodily defilement excluded the *israelites* from the camp, and the tabernacle where God dwelt: He dwelt there in his majesty and justice, and threatened death to defiled persons that came near his altar, to represent his punishment of the guilt of sin; he dwelt there in his holiness, and commanded them to stand at a distance, to shew that the disorderly nature of sin made persons unfit to converse with God. Thus all the ceremonial pollutions of the *Jews* typified one of these two, either the guilt of sin, or it's disorder and viciousity.

2. The defilement of sin is represented as producing shame and fear in the sinner in the presence of God. A person in forbidden and defiled garments, or besmeared with mire and nastiness, is afraid to come into the presence of his prince, a wife and just governor, as well as ashamed to appear before him as a person of high dignity. Now one of these is the effect of the guilt of sin; the other of it's disorder. A sinner fears the justice and majesty of God, because of his guilt, and the injury he has done to the divine law; he knows he is liable to death, he sees his own defilement and God's justice, and is afraid and trembles. A sinner, in his sinful disorder of soul, is also ashamed in the presence of a holy God, seeing every thing in the divine nature so contrary to his own heart and his own actions, being defiled, that is, disordered by sin. Thus the guilt of sin produces fear, and the disorder of sin produces shame.

A parallel might be drawn in this instance also between the levitical defilements of the flesh and the more spiritual evils of sin. The mere suggestion of this thought is sufficient for those who are acquainted with the mosaical ceremonies, and the representations of God, as dwelling in the holy of holies, in the glories of his justice and holiness.

3. The defilement of sin sometimes is represented as debasing the nature of the soul, and rendering it vile. *Psal.* xlix. 20. "A man without understanding, that is, without the fear or love of God, or true holiness, is mean and vile, as the beasts that perish:" This arises from the inward pravity or real evil that is in it. Vicious disorders either in heart or life, debase the character of a creature; but under this idea the guilt of sin, or relative evil of it, is not contained, but only the disorder, or the real evil: But still it is plain that this representation always means the one or the other.

II. Another way to prove that the defilement of sin is no third thing distinct from the guilt and the disorder of it, may be this.

The methods or means of removing the defilement of sin are such as are suited to remove either the guilt or the disorder of it.

1. Washing is the most general means to remove bodily defilements; and this is a metaphor which the scripture abounds in sometimes to express the removal of guilt by atonement and pardon, and sometimes the removal of the disorder of sin in our souls by sanctification. When we are said to be "washed by the blood of Christ from our sins," *Rev.* i. 5. there the defilement implied must signify guilt: But when we are said to be washed and cleansed from a sinful nature, by "having the Spirit of God poured upon us, or by being sprinkled with clean water," *Isa.* xlv. 3. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25. which is done in baptism and regeneration; or when we are bid to "wash us and to make us clean," *Isa.* i. 16.

in these places the defilement which is implied must signify the sinful disorders of our natures and lives.

This also is very evident in the levitical methods of cleansing the typical defilements of old: sometimes the blood of the sacrifice was to be put on persons defiled, to signify the removal of guilt by the death of *Christ* the great sacrifice: sometimes they were to be washed in clean water, to signify the removal of the inward moral disorder of sin by the sanctifying Spirit.

2. Another method of removing bodily defilements is by fire; so silver and gold passing through the fire lose their dross and impurity, and are refined and made pure: Now when the defilement of sin is represented as removed by fire, sometimes it signifies the removing the disorderly temper and qualities of mind, by the Spirit of God, or by afflictive providences; see *Mal.* iii. 2. "He is like a refiner's fire: He shall purify the sons of *Levi*, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness." *Zech.* xiii. 9. "And I will bring a third part of them through the fire, and refine them as silver is refined."

This was typified by the levitical purifications: The gold and other metals that were under legal or typical defilements, by having been abused to idolatry by heathens, must pass through the fire to be cleansed and fitted for the use of God's holy people, and his holy temple, *Numb.* xxxi. 23. whereas those materials which could not bear the fire were to be purified by water for the same service.

In the sixth chapter of the prophecy of *Isaiab*, where he gives an account of his complaint in the presence of the Lord, "I am a man of unclean lips: Woe is me, for I am undone, my eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts, a seraph took a live coal from the altar of burnt-offering, and laid it upon his mouth, and said, lo this hath touched thy lips, and thy iniquity is taken away; thy sin is purged." It is hard to say whether this chiefly refers to a pardon of the guilt of past sins of the tongue, or a purification of his lips and heart from sinful disorders. But it is certainly one or both these.

In the last place, I might add another proof that the defilement of sin is not any thing different both from the guilt and the disorder of sin, if we consider, that when the guilt of sin is removed by pardon and justification, and the disorder or evil qualities of sin are removed perfectly by sanctification, what is there remaining that can be hurtful to man or offensive to God? It is possible in the nature of things, that the guilt of sin and all obligations to punishment may be taken away from a person by pardoning grace, and yet the impurity or sinful disorder of the soul may remain. It is possible also that the sinfulness or the moral disorder and evil qualities of the soul may be removed by sanctifying grace, and yet the guilt of past sins may remain: But where divine grace hath both pardoned and sanctified the soul completely, there remains no more moral defilement, no sinful pollution, nothing more that can give us either fear or shame, whether we appear before God in the justice of his government, or in the holiness of his nature. This defilement therefore appears evidently to be nothing but a figure of speech borrowed from material things, whereby either the guilt, or the disorder of sin, the relative or real evil of it are represented.

Now though this metaphor of the defilement of sin may sometimes signify the guilt, sometimes the disorderly nature of it, yet let it be noted, that the scripture, in it's common forms of speech, does, I think, more frequently use or imply the metaphor.



metaphor of filth or pollution \* to signify the inherent disorder or real evil that is in sin, than the guilt or relative evil of it; and I believe we may so understand it in most places where such kind of metaphors are used: and consequently when we use this metaphor of defilement, pollution, &c. we should rather apply it to the pravity and disorder of sin than to the guilt of it.

And particularly let it be observed, that wheresoever the guilt of sin and the defilement of sin are mentioned together in the writings of our divines, and represented as distinct and different things, there the guilt evidently signifies that offence against the divine law which subjects us to punishment; and the defilement must mean only that evil quality in sin which is contrary to the divine nature or holiness, which makes us unlike to God, and unfit for his presence, service or enjoyment.

If this explication of the filth or defilement of sin be admitted, that it sometimes may signify the relative evil, but more frequently and properly the real evil of sin, it will be easy to answer those perplexing questions which some persons have raised about this subject, viz.

Question I. Can the defilement of *Adam's* first sin be transferred to his offspring by imputation?

Answer. If we will speak of the defilement of sin to express the guilt of it, or it's relative evil, which exposes us to the just anger of God and to punishment, according to the threatenings of his law; it is evident by the foregoing discourses in this book, that it may be imputed to us, for we suffer a thousand painful evils and death at the end of them for the sin of *Adam*.

But if by the defilement of sin we mean as we rather ought to do in accurate speech the real evil of it, or it's disorderly nature and contrariety to the image of God in the soul, and as spoiling the best powers of man, unfitting us for converse with God, and naturally tending to our destruction and misery, this is not properly imputed to us from *Adam*; but this sinful nature is really transferred or derived from *Adam* to us by the laws of generation or propagation which were given at first to man, as in question vi, and vii.

And thence it comes to pass that original sin is divided by our divines into imputed and inherent: the one is relative, and subjects us to the misery threatened, the other is real, and makes us actually sinful.

Question II. How far was our Lord *Jesus Christ* our great surety concerned in the filth or defilement of our sin?

Some pronounce it boldly that he took upon him the filth and pollution of our sins, though at the same time they mistake and suppose it to mean something really distinct from the guilt. Others again renounce and abominate that thought, lest *Christ* should be represented as defiled with sin; but at the same time they give no fair account or intelligible notion of the filth of sin, distinct from the guilt of it, that guilt which was certainly imputed to *Christ*, when "he was made sin for us," and when "he bore our sins in his body on the cursed tree." 2 Cor. v. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 24.

I think

\* Note, I think these express words or substantives, pollution, &c. are scarce ever used in scripture, or in human writings, to signify merely the guilt of sin, or the obligation to punishment, without carrying in them the idea of the real evil or disorder, or culpable demerit of sin.

I think it is evident from many scriptures\*, that our legal subjection to punishment and misery by the guilt of sin, which is the relative evil of it, was imputed or transferred to *Christ*, and he took it away by offering himself a sacrifice of atonement or expiation, which hath procured pardoning mercy for us: but neither scripture nor reason will allow that the moral disorder of sin, the vicious impurity or criminal pollution, or real evil of it, was transferred any way to our blessed Saviour, the "holy one of God, who knew no sin." While men of controversy deal much in metaphors they fight in the dark; but if we could persuade them to turn these metaphors into proper expressions, and bring the disputants into clear and open light, they would contend no more.

If we would speak more distinctly and accurately, and without a figure on this subject, I think we should not indulge ourselves to say the "guilt of sin cannot be transferred by imputation, or that the defilement of sin may be imputed to another," for either of these will be ready to lead those who hear us into some mistake; since, in my opinion, it is evident that the guilt of *Adam's* sin, or it's subjection of the sinner to punishment, was imputed to us, and thereby we are born in sufferings. It is also evident that the guilt of our sins was imputed to *Christ*, for which he suffered and obtained our pardon; but the disorder or evil nature and qualities of sin, which are transmitted to us from *Adam* by natural propagation, can never be imputed to our blessed Saviour, nor transferred to him any way whatsoever.

Yet to express my charity for all sincere enquirers after truth, I would lay down this conclusion, that if such a sincere, humble and diligent enquirer will neither acknowledge the guilt of sin capable of being transferred to another by imputation, nor the defilement or sinfulness of nature to be conveyed by propagation, I will not be angry with him, while he allows what I think the sense of scripture incontestably reveals and maintains, viz: that we justly suffer for the sin of *Adam* in the providence and righteous government of God, that hereby the children of *Adam* are born with inclinations to sin, and that *Jesus Christ* the Son of God was justly made an offering for our sins, being with his own consent devoted to death for us sinners by God the Father.

If christians will but acknowledge the first *Adam* was our head, who some way conveyed unto us natural life, sinful inclinations, diseases and death, according to some righteous divine constitution or covenant, and that *Jesus Christ*, the second *Adam*, was also our better head, who conveys to us spiritual life, pardon and justification, resurrection from the dead, and immortality by a new and better covenant; and if they practise the faith, repentance and new obedience of the gospel, peace be with them all, and everlasting grace in my sincerest wishes, though they do not subscribe to all my words, nor speak precisely the same language with me. Grace and peace be with all those for ever that honestly seek the truths of God, and love our Lord *Jesus Christ* in sincerity. Amen.

\* Several scriptures tells us, that "*Christ* bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that he was made sin for us, that all our iniquities were laid upon him, that he bare the sins of many, that his soul was made an offering for sin, &c." Now what is it in or of sin that he bare or took upon him, if not the guilt of it, or our obligation to punishment; or suffering thereby, when he willingly became our surety? there is nothing else of sin that he could be charged or burdened with, or that could be imputed to him, or reckoned to his account, and for which he actually made atonement by his suffering, and so took away this guilt of sin.



## P O S T S C R I P T

## To these E S S A Y S.

SOME of the doctrines maintained in this book depend upon a right notion of imputed sin, or a translation of guilt and punishment from one person to another, which I have explained at large in the second and third essay: But there are some writers in the present age who have asserted, that as guilt is intirely personal and can never be transferred, so innocence and punishment are inconsistent ideas: and consequently no sin of *Adam* can be punished upon his posterity, nor can they be justly laid under misery for any sins of their father: Nor can the sins of any part of mankind be punished upon *Jesus Christ*, the mediator.

Those great and eminent writers the learned *Grotius* and doctor *Stillingfleet*, in their defenses of the satisfaction of *Christ*, suppose the actual desert of punishment to be personal and inseparable from the agent or actual sinner; but they suppose still that the guilt or obligation to punishment may be transferred from one person to another; that is to say, sin may be imputed as to the punishment thereof to persons who did not actually commit that sin. I suppose all men will allow those authors were very well acquainted with the civil law, as well as with the light of nature, and the reason of things; and I must acknowledge I fall in with their sentiments as most consistent with reason and scripture.

But a certain learned and ingenious writer, who opposes them in these sentiments, maintains, that "there is no such thing as an obligation to punishment, but what consists in a real desert of punishment; nor is there any real guilt but what is personal; and that the punishment of an innocent person, whether with or without his consent, is not only a violation of truth, but is a moral contradiction, for he is no subject of punishment in any respect. No right can be in the universe to punish the innocent, unless there can be a right to violate truth and equity. To punish an innocent person, would be treating him directly contrary to what he is, which is as manifest a violation of truth as can well be conceived." Therefore some infer that the posterity of *Adam* can never be punished for his sin, nor could our Saviour be punished for the sins of mankind\*.

He grants indeed, that the scripture uses these terms of "*Christ's* bearing our sins, that he was wounded for our transgressions, and the iniquity of us all was laid upon him," with many other expressions of the like nature: But these expressions, he says, are merely figurative, for strictly speaking, he could no more bear our punishment, than he could bear our iniquity, or become sin for us; being both

\* See "an essay on redemption, being the second part of divine reclusion," page 3—30; by Mr. *John Balguy*.

both alike essentially repugnant in a literal sense to the truth and nature of things.

Thus I have set this objection in the strongest light, and almost in the author's own words; and yet I think it may be effectually answered in this manner.

Answer I. This ingenious author's assertions concerning "guilt, obligation to punishment, and translation of this obligation, and vicarious punishment" of one for the sins of another, &c. are plainly contrary to the common sense and practice of mankind, who often punish the crimes of parents on the children, and of offenders on their sureties. This is known more especially by those who are conversant with the civil law on these subjects; I think therefore such assertions ought not to influence our assent, without most evident proof, any more than the assertions of doctor *Stillingfleet* and *Grotius*, and many other writers upon this theme, who express themselves in direct contradiction to what this author maintains.

Is it not a thing very commonly practised amongst men, that the children are banished or disinherited of their father's estate, and become poor and miserable for the sake of their father's treason, or other crimes? Is not something of this kind done in almost every nation, without any complaint of injustice, and without any censure upon the magistrate on this account? And why should it be esteemed utterly unjust in things sacred, that the great God should impute sin to the posterity of *Adam*, by bringing misery and death upon them? Or that he should impute the sins of mankind to his Son *Jesus Christ*, who was a voluntary surety, and punish them upon him, which is acknowledged to be the plain natural and literal sense of the expressions of scripture? But we are told, these must be figures and metaphors, because this author does not allow the literal sense to be consistent with truth and justice.

Answer II. This argument for the same reason would forbid any rewards to be given to families and posterity, upon the account of great and worthy actions performed by the ancestors: For when the son or grandson of some eminent patriot, or deliverer of his country, has the honours of nobility paid him, which were first given to his father upon his personal merit, this is as much contrary to truth, and as much a falsehood in fact, as if the treasons of a father were punished upon a son. This son or grandson did never perform these glorious and honourable services himself, which is evidently known to the world, and yet the rewards being continued to them, seem to say, that this son or grandson did perform them, in the same sense as this author supposes sufficient to contradict truth, and to destroy all imputation of guilt to another. The translation of rewards in this manner, is as contrary to truth in fact as a translation of penalties.

Answer III. The force of this argument seems to be all taken from the late Mr. *Woollaston's* supposed foundation of moral virtue and religion, which is built entirely upon natural or logical truth, in his book of "the religion of nature delineated." Truth, as he supposes, may be expressed in actions as well as in words; and consequently, that all such actions as do not represent things exactly in their natural or logical truth, are falsehoods in fact, or a sort of lies, and therefore unlawful and unjust; being contrary to truth, they are contrary to morality, religion and justice. But this notion of Mr. *Woollaston* has never yet been proved to be true, though there are many excellent sentiments found in that treatise.

It is not evident, that God has any where, either by the light of reason or revelation, told us, that actions have the same power to distinguish and determine veracity and falsehood as words have. It has always been granted by our best casuists, that simulation in action, that is, a feint, or disguise, or a mere appearance, or counterfeit



of things, may be often good and virtuous, where dissimulation, however it be explained, or falsehood in words, is never lawful or virtuous. But this notion of Mr. *Woolaston* tends to bring in much superstition, that is, to make more sins than God hath forbidden, and more duties than God hath prescribed, by making all simulation in action to be unlawful. And if ever that general doctrine should obtain, it stands in need of many cautions and limitations to guard our consciences from endless scruples, or from intrenching upon morality and truth at every turn.

I say yet further, This doctrine seems to forbid all the common conduct even of wise and good men, in covering or disguising any action or design in the civil life, even though the same was practised by our Saviour or his apostles: It renders all stratagems in war immoral and unlawful, even though appointed by God himself. Let us survey this matter a little.

When God ordered *Joshua* and all *Israel* to lay an ambush behind the city of *Ai*, and when by *Joshua's* command they fled from the battle, and made as if they were beaten, *Josh. viii. 2, 15.* were they guilty of such a falsehood in fact, by their flying when they were not afraid, as turns this action into immorality, or made it unlawful?

When *Gideon* with three hundred men, whom God had chosen for this purpose, broke their pitchers, discovered their lamps, and sounded their trumpets, *Judg. vii. 16.* whereby the host of *Midian* were led to believe that there were three hundred troops or companies rather than three hundred men; was *Gideon* guilty of such a falsehood in fact, as should turn this stratagem into iniquity?

When our blessed Saviour, *Luke xxiv. 28.* walking with some of his disciples toward a village, made as though he would have gone further, did he exert any action by this simulation, which was inconsistent with truth or righteousness? And yet I know not how it can be defended by Mr. *Woolaston's* principles.

When Saint *Paul* became as a *jew* among the *jews*, and as a gentile among the gentiles, *1 Cor. ix. 20, 21.* When he took a vow upon him, and purified himself, *Acts xxi. 23,—26.* When he circumcised *Timothy*, *Acts xvi. 3.* Did he falsify truth so as to become criminal?

But to come nearer to the present controversy: When the prophet *Elisba* pronounced a leprosy upon *Gebazi* and his seed, for the gross crime of his lying and covetousness, *2 Kings v. 27.* and when this curse was inflicted upon any of his posterity; did this event say to the world, that these children of *Gebazi* were guilty of such covetousness and lying too? Or was it not consistent with divine veracity to inflict such a curse?

When *Phinehas* had executed judgment by slaying two idolaters, and God gave him and his seed the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, *Numb. xxv. 11, 13.* and his children were successively made priests, was here any criminal falsehood in fact, as though each of these children had performed that glorious execution against idolatry?

When the seed of *Abraham* and *Jacob* met with many successive blessings from God, upon the account of the special acts of their faith and obedience, which were promised to be thus rewarded; did these numerous blessings on the *Israelites* declare to the world, that each of these private persons so blessed were actual performers of those acts of faith and obedience? Or was there any criminal falsehood that belonged to these providences?

In short, a number of such instances might be cited, wherein it is sufficiently evident, that the doctrine of imputed sin and imputed righteousness is by no means to be

be charged with those consequences, which learned men who follow this scheme would cast upon them.

It may be queried also, whether this learned author doth not allow, that we are pardoned and made happy on the account of what *Christ* hath done and suffered, so that the benefit is transferred to us who have never done the meritorious actions? Is this perfectly consistent with the truth of things?

He will say indeed, "That all our blessings are properly a reward to *Christ*:" But since the reward terminates upon us, may it not justly occasion a doubt, whether this be entirely agreeable to the sentiment of truth and falsehood in actions as the test of all morality and justice?

It must be acknowledged to the honour of this reverend author, who has espoused this notion of Mr. *Woolaston's*, that he hath argued with just reason and unanswerable force against the deists of the age, and in vindication of the "divine rectitude in creation and providence;" and he hath very ingeniously and happily proved in this same treatise, that "mere repentance and new obedience are not a sufficient ground for sinners to claim pardon and acceptance with God," the universal governor of the world: But if any such writers should proceed upon these sentiments of Mr. *Woolaston*, to demolish the divine doctrines of the "translation of guilt, and of vicarious punishment; of our suffering misery and death on the account of the sin of *Adam*; and of *Christ's* being a proper sacrifice for the sins of men in his death, and bearing their sins so as to make atonement for them;" I ask leave, with all the respect I bear to their character, to yield up neither my faith, nor my reason to their assertions.



to be charged with such consequences, which I cannot but think would be a great injustice to the cause of the slave. I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,  
Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

AN  
ESSAY  
ON THE  
FREEDOM of WILL  
IN  
GOD and in CREATURES.

AND ON

Various subjects connected therewith.

*VIZ.*

The ideas of LIBERTY and NECESSITY;

The causes of the determination of the will; the use of the understanding to direct, not to determine it;

The liberty of GOD as a creator, a governor, and a benefactor;

The doctrine of FATALITY; the spring of moral good and evil; the difference between moral and positive laws;

The sin and fall of man, and the free grace of GOD;

The rewardableness of faith in the gospel, and the criminal nature of infidelity.



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evil; the difference between moral and positive laws;  
The sin and fall of man, and the free grace of GOD;  
The rewardableness of faith in the gospel, and the criminal na-  
ture of infidelity.

# A N E S S A Y O N

## The freedom of will in GOD and in CREATURES.

### S E C T I O N I.

*Of liberty and necessity, and how far they are consistent.*

**L**IBERTY is a word which has been attributed to ideas very distinct and different; and necessity has also it's various significations: Hence proceeds that confusion and seeming inconsistency which sometimes appears among our thoughts, and may have been found perhaps in some writings on this subject; nor is it easy to avoid it in an argument of so much difficulty: And therefore I bespeak the candor of the reader while I am attempting to strike a little light into a theme, which has been surrounded with much darkness and perplexity.

I shall not run into a wild chace of all the distinctions of necessity which the schools have taught us: but it seems to be needful for us to take notice in general, that a thing is called necessary, when it must be so, and cannot be otherwise, whatever be the reason and cause of this necessity.

If the cause or reason of this necessity arise from the very nature of the thing, it is called an internal or natural necessity; so a bowl may be said necessarily to roll down a hill: and a beast necessarily to avoid the fire, or to quench it's thirst when a fountain is near. But if this necessity arise from some apparent outward constraint or restraint, then it is called an external or forcible necessity: Thus a bowl is driven up hill by the force of a stroke impelling it; or a beast necessarily goes through the fire when he is constrained or dragged into it by outward force; or an ox necessarily abstains from drink when he is withheld by bars or fetters from a neighbouring fountain. What other distinctions of necessity are needful, will afterwards appear.

Liberty stands generally in opposition to necessity of each kind, both inward and outward; both a necessity of nature, and a necessity of force; and that is certainly the best and most proper sense of it; yet there seem to be some cases wherein those



those actions which are necessary, have also been called free: and if we would make a more careful enquiry into this matter, we must take a brief survey of the different sorts or kinds of liberty, that is, the different cases to which this word is applied, and then we may better judge how far necessity is consistent or inconsistent with it.

I. Liberty or freedom may be attributed in a figurative sense to inanimate beings; so we say by way of simile, free as the air or wind. It is yet a little more properly applied to animals; so a bird released from its cage is free, or a horse from his bridle or harness. All manner of outward necessity, that is, restraint or constraint, is inconsistent with this freedom of brute creatures. But there are some actions which a beast performs with a kind of brutal freedom, and yet by a sort of natural necessity also. A horse naturally avoids the fire by an inward necessity, though he doth it freely, that is, with all the freedom he has: and when he is thirsty, he freely drinks, yet it is by an inward or natural necessity, where nothing restrains him.

But leaving these ideas of a less proper freedom, let us rather consider liberty in its more proper sense, as it belongs to men or other intelligent creatures, or to God himself, who is the Creator.

II. Liberty, as ascribed to intellectual beings, is either moral or natural. Natural liberty has various ideas, as will appear immediately. Moral liberty is a freedom from all superior authority: in this sense, God alone is universally and perfectly free, having no authority superior to himself. But there are many instances of particular moral freedom among men; an apprentice is free from the authority of his master when he has served seven years; and the lad is free from the government of his tutor when his childhood is past, and he commences man. It is no longer necessary that the apprentice should obey his master's commands, nor the youth those of his tutor, which it was morally necessary or plain duty for them to obey before. In this moral sense, necessity or restraint and liberty are evidently inconsistent.

III. Natural liberty must be distinguished into a liberty of volition, or a liberty of action: The first is a liberty of the will, the last is rather a liberty of the executive powers\*. It is this freedom of volition or chusing which is properly the liberty of an intelligent being, and the chief subject of dispute, and not the freedom of the inferior powers from restraint or constraint in acting or executing the determinations of the will. There are many cases wherein the will may be free to chuse, but the man is not free to act. The freedom of the will is very consistent with the restraint of action: so a person whose mouth is stopped, may be willing or chuse either to speak or to keep silence; and he is free in this choice, so far as the volition goes; but he is not free to act, for he hath not power to speak if he did chuse it; he is under a necessity to keep silence. Suppose *Simon* and *Lepidus* were locked up in prison with their friend *Crato*: *Lepidus* chuses to go out, but cannot, and is uneasy; *Simon* chuses to tarry there, and there he tarries chearfully: They are equally free in their different choice and volition; but both are under a necessity to act the same thing, viz. to abide in prison, one according to his choice, the other against it.

IV.

\* Note, When action is contradistinguished from volition, I mean chiefly the action or motion of the inferior and executive powers; for in the nature of things, the will is the chief agent, and volition is action in the properest sense; but I fear it deviates too much from the sense of mankind to permit the words action and agent to be applied only to the will, and to nothing else, as some writers have done in this controversy. However, it is but a debate about words.

IV. The liberty of the will is generally distinguished by writers on this subject, into a liberty of indifference or choice, and a liberty of spontaneity or voluntariness.

Actions of the soul are said to be free with this spontaneous or voluntary freedom, when the soul of man pursues any object or performs any act, or chuses any pleasure, without any consideration whether it can chuse any other object, or perform the contrary action. This is a most large and extensive sense of the word liberty; for in this sense every act of the will is and must be free, for every act is spontaneous or voluntary; and indeed this freedom of the will seems to be but a dilute idea, for it signifies scarce any thing more than it is an act of the will. So we are said with the greatest freedom to do those actions to which we have the strongest inclination, and wherein we take the greatest pleasure; not considering or enquiring whether these actions are necessary or no: that consideration does not come into this notion of liberty. It is a common instance in this case, that all sensible beings with spontaneity and freedom pursue what they call pleasure or happiness; yet they are generally said to do this by a sort of necessity too, because it belongs to their nature, and they cannot do otherwise. This is attributed to brutes as well as men. And so the blessed above with perfect liberty love God; yet so constantly, that it appears almost natural and necessary. So God with the strongest and most exalted freedom, and yet unchangeably and necessarily, loves himself as the highest good, and pursues his own glory as the noblest end. Every necessary and immanent action that God doth with regard to himself, and many transient actions towards his creatures, are perfectly spontaneous and free with an absolute liberty of this kind; and yet perhaps he cannot do otherwise, that is, his will naturally and eternally and unchangeably determines itself to these actions; he freely and necessarily consults himself in all his designs, and decrees and always acts agreeably to his own perfections; he is freely and necessarily just and true to his creatures.

I know some great writers distinguish here between a natural and a moral necessity, and call all those actions of the will which are really natural, as well as constant, certain and universal, such as acts of truth, and justice in God, morally necessary; and will allow scarce any thing to be naturally necessary but what belongs to matter, or to the mere passive, or perceptive powers of a spirit: I grant indeed, that the will, which is influenced by rational motives, is not under such a sort of influence in it's actions as bodies are, because bodies are mechanically moved; yet the necessity may be as strong and unalterable: and if it be the very nature of God to act justly and faithfully, so that he cannot will, nor act otherwise, it may be called, I think, a natural necessity, since it springs from his nature; as well as it may be called a moral one, because it is the action of an intelligent and free agent.

Now let us enquire what is a liberty of choice or of indifference. Though necessary actions are sometimes said to be free, when they are done thus spontaneously, as I have described, yet a liberty of choice or indifference in things not necessary is the more common sense in which the word liberty is used: This is the second branch of this fourth distinction, and this implies a "power to chuse or refuse", to chuse

\* Here note, I do not describe liberty of choice or indifference, as many have done, by a power to act, or not to act, but a power to chuse or refuse; for there is a great deal of difference between a freedom of willing or chusing, and a freedom of acting what we chuse, as I have shewn before: and much darkness and confusion is brought in upon this subject of liberty, by not keeping this distinction clear. Perhaps that great man, Mr. *Locke*, had writ more perspicuously on this subject, if he had always maintained this distinction, for he describes liberty, a power to act or not to act, &c.



one thing or another among several things which are proposed, without any inward or outward restraint, force or constraining bias or influence. So I feel myself at liberty, and I chuse to stand or walk; I am free, and chuse either to speak or keep silence, to point upward or downward; I chuse one egg and refuse another out of two that are offered. Man is free whether he will chuse to honour God his maker, or dishonour him; to do good to his neighbour, or do him hurt; to keep himself sober, or to make himself drunk: In all these things he may chuse or refuse which he pleases. This is what the schools call "*libertas indifferentiæ ad opposita*," that is, a liberty of indifference to chuse one thing, or it's opposite.

This liberty is utterly inconsistent with all necessity, whether natural or forcible, that is, with all necessity of every kind: whatsoever is any way necessary, or imposed or constrained, cannot in this sense be called free. Whensoever the will is necessarily determined to any act or object by any thing without or within itself, it has not a liberty of choice or indifference; for upon this supposition of it's being necessarily determined to one thing, it is evident that it could not chuse the contrary.

V. In the last place, liberty or freedom of the will is either absolute and perfect, or imperfect and comparative.

When we chuse or determine any thing without any manner of constraint on one side, or restraint on the other; when we act or determine one way, without any reluctance or any bias toward the contrary side, this is called absolute and perfect freedom: so God chuses to be just and true; so a wise being chuses to follow the dictates of reason wheresoever they appear; so every sensible being is said to chuse and pursue in general what it calls pleasure or happiness, though sometimes it mistakes wherein happiness consists, and follows instead of it a shadow or mischief.

Comparative liberty or freedom is when the mind has some inward reluctance or aversion to those actions which yet it wills to perform for other more prevailing reasons; or when it has an inward inclination and desire to do some action which yet it wills to neglect, being powerfully impelled by other considerations: so a malefactor may be said freely or voluntarily to go to his execution; for though he has an inward aversion to it, yet he chuses it comparatively, that is, rather than to be dragged thither by force: so a sick man is comparatively free in chusing to drink a bitter potion rather than to bear continued sickness.

Now this sort of volition in common speech is sometimes said not to be free, because the man doth not absolutely chuse this, but only prefers a less evil to a greater; and the words, not free, in this place signify only a less degree of freedom. Men are ready to conclude in this case, that because in common speaking the man was constrained, or, as it were, necessitated to go to the gibbet by a superior motive, therefore he went not freely; though indeed it was an act of choice, or comparative freedom, that is, rather than be dragged: And, by this way of speaking, viz. that he went not freely, we come also to imagine that freedom and necessity are utterly inconsistent things: yet it is plain that though here was a sort of necessity or constraint, yet the man was free and voluntary in his own act.

It is no wonder now that there should be such contests and controversies about the nature of liberty, or the use of the word, since it plainly appears that the words not free sometimes signify only less free; and since the same action may be said at the same time to be not free, that is, absolutely, because we do it with some reluctance, and yet it is said to be free, that is, comparatively, because we do it at last voluntarily, and prefer it before something worse.

We may also take occasion to remark, that if such actions which are not done with a full freedom may be called comparatively free, then there can be no voluntary

tary acts, or acts of the will, but have some natural freedom also, that is, at least a comparative freedom: for the will cannot act without so much freedom as this is; and consequently the will itself cannot be really compelled, but natural freedom or liberty will still belong to it in all possible actions; though not always a liberty of choice or indifference.

After all this debate, I will readily acknowledge, that some of these disputes, whether such and such actions are free or no, are rather disputes about words than things: And if the world would all agree to confine the words liberty and freedom, to signify nothing but a freedom of choice, a liberty of indifference, or a power to chuse or refuse, which is inconsistent with any necessity of choice, and which must be allowed to be the most usual sense of it, I should be so far from disapproving of it, that I think it would be the best way of speaking and writing. And therefore I give notice here, that I shall chiefly use the word freedom in this sense in the following sections. If we could but always confine every term to one certain determinate idea, we should gain and preserve much clearer ideas of things; we should make much swifter and larger advances in knowledge; we should cut off a thousand occasions of mistake, and take away a multitude of controversies. But when we are enquiring, what is liberty or freedom, which in the present sense and use of the word among mankind is applied to various cases, we must not explain the word so as utterly to exclude any spontaneous actions, or actions of the will, which men have frequently called free, though they also may appear necessary, or in some sense constrained.

Among other remarks on this subject, it is proper also to take notice, that our judging concerning the truth or falsehood, fitness or unfitness, good or evil of things, is generally ascribed to that power of the soul which is called the mind or understanding: And because when we do pass a judgment, we have no power to judge otherwise than as things appear to the mind at that time, therefore judgment is called a necessary thing; and indeed judgment is but an assent or dissent of the mind, as things appear true or false to the mind; and on this account it is supposed to have no freedom or liberty belonging to it. But if we will make a careful observation of what passes in the transactions of the soul on these occasions, we shall find that though the mind cannot assent or dissent, cannot judge of things contrary to what they plainly appear, yet the will has a great deal to do in our judgments concerning objects proposed to the mind.

The will is sometimes led by appetite or passion, and has an inclination to chuse a particular object, and then it wishes that object to be fit and good: It readily yields to the prejudices that lie on that side, it fixes the mind upon those arguments, which tend to prove what it wishes, and turns the thoughts away from those evidences, which lie on the other side of the question, and does not suffer them to be brought into full view and comparison; and thus secretly it influences the soul to judge the thing it desires to be good or fit, that is, to assent to those arguments, which are brought to prove it's fitness, keeping the contrary arguments much out of sight. It is an old *roman* proverb, "*Quod volumus facile credimus*," "We easily believe that which we wish to be true:" There is indeed a secret dishonesty and insincerity in this conduct, though we are not willing to take notice of it.

The will also has power to hasten and precipitate our fixed assent or dissent to propositions in the mind, and to hurry on the judgment to determine concerning the fitness or goodness of things upon a slight and insufficient view. The soul of man is soon tired and weary of suspense, and the will hastening to choice and action



before due evidence, is really guilty of that rash judgment and rash action: For the will has power to withhold the assent in many cases, and to delay the judgment where things do not appear to the mind with full and bright evidence, and to set the mind upon searching further, and viewing the object again on all sides, before it judges concerning its truth, fitness, or goodness: And by this means the will may take care that the soul pass a juster judgment on things, after a fuller and longer survey of them. And even where things appear with a pretty good degree of evidence, the will is able to delay our assent, and withhold it for a season; as for instance, if any learned and knowing friend stand by and warn us of danger and mistake, and bid us take heed of assenting too soon, lest we are imposed upon by false appearances, the will is able to prolong the delay of the judgment, and to withhold it from pronouncing upon the fitness or goodness of that object.

Let it be observed, that I do not alter our common forms of speech, nor attribute judgment to the will, though indeed it seems to be some determining operation of the soul, consequent to the appearances of ideas in the mind; and therefore it is not merely what some great writers have represented it, viz. "feeling what we feel, or hearing what we hear;" for we can suspend and delay our assent or judgment, even when a good degree of evidence appears to the mind; and we are also led sometimes to give a stronger or weaker assent, according to the inclinations of the will, or desires of the heart, neither of which can be properly said with regard to feeling or hearing.

I say again, I will not directly call judging an act of choice or voluntary operation; and yet there is so much of this kind of operation in the soul exerted about its passing a judgment on things, that I think we must agree that the will has a great deal to do in it: and therefore the errors, derived from these wilful rash judgments, have something criminal in them, as well as they lead us into further criminal actions. And were not this the true account of things, I cannot see how faith or unbelief of the gospel could have any thing in them worthy either of praise or blame: But this is only a hint by the way.

Mr. *Locke* in his essay, book II. chapter 21. section 47. after some other representations of human liberty, which seem not to be perfectly just, represents it to consist much in a power of delaying the execution of our desires, or suspending the acts of volition or choice, until the man has diligently examined on all sides what is best: Now this no doubt is a very great part of human liberty; and *Des Cartes*, the french philosopher, with good appearance of reason, makes this power of suspending the acts of the soul to extend to our assent to truth, as well as to the pursuit of good; and therefore he proceeds so far, as to make judgment rather to belong to the will, and to be justly laudable or blame-worthy. Mr. *Locke* seems also to come pretty near to the opinion which I have proposed, as appears in the prosecution of this discourse of his about our judgments of good and evil, and our choice and practice consequent thereon; on which subject he has many excellent thoughts in morality.

## S E C T I O N II.

*What determines the will to chuse or act.*

LET us now consider the human will in the common sense of it, as that power of the soul whereby we chuse or refuse what is proposed to the mind. The usual principles which are supposed by philosophers to be causes of the determination of the will to act, in chusing one thing, or in refusing another, are chiefly these three, viz. The greatest apparent good as it is discovered to the mind, or the last dictate of the understanding, or the removal of some uneasiness. Let us consider these three particularly.

First, "the greatest apparent good." This does not properly mean moral good or virtue, but natural good, or that which most conduces to our ease, pleasure or happiness. Now this greatest apparent natural good as it is discovered to the understanding, and considered as the cause which certainly influences and determines the will, doth not differ really from the last assent or dictate of the understanding \* considered in this same view of influence: for it is the last assent of the understanding concerning the apparent goodness of a thing which is supposed to determine the will to chuse it, and therefore these two are really but one thing under different names or appearances; and as such I shall consider them.

Now among other evidences or proofs that the greatest apparent good does not always determine the will to chuse or act, I shall mention but these three.

1. If the greatest apparent good always and necessarily determines the will to chuse it, then the will is never free with a liberty of choice or indifference; for things placed in such a certain view, or seen in such a certain light, will necessarily appear to that individual understanding, and at that time in such a particular manner, viz. as fit or unfit, as good or evil, as a greater or lesser good; and consequently such appearances to the understanding, will, according to this hypothesis, necessarily determine the will to chuse this greatest appearing good. And this is the very scheme of the fatalists, whereby they prove all human actions to be necessary, and that there is no such thing as freedom of choice in any intelligent being whatsoever: And according to this hypothesis, it will not be easy to give a fair and satisfactory answer to the arguments which the fatalists bring against all our notions of moral good and evil, if all human actions are in this manner necessary: But of this more hereafter.

2. The greatest apparent good does not always determine the will; for there are many persons convinced that future happiness pursued in a way of piety and virtue, is really the greatest natural good: this appears very plain to their understanding; and yet their will chuses present sensualities and vicious pleasures, and pursues them in opposition to this greatest apparent good, and the last dictate of their understanding about it. The power of the will to chuse and act in this case continues the same after the last dictate of the understanding as it did before; and in weak and foolish creatures, the will sometimes exerts this power by acting and chusing contrary to it.

Some indeed will say, that in this case the mind or understanding being influenced and blinded by sensual appetite, makes a rash judgement, and then the understand-

\* The last assent of the understanding perhaps is a better term, because the last dictate seems to denote too much of action; whereas the understanding is represented properly as a passive power.



ing finally dictates, that for this present moment vicious pleasure is the greatest good, and is to be preferred; and so the will pursues it.

But I rather think it is the violence of appetite or passion that many times biases and inclines the will strongly, yet not necessarily, to follow vicious pleasure; and this it does without changing the dictate of the understanding, or convictions of the mind about the greatest apparent good, but rather overpowering them by present influences; according to the old poet, "*video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor.*" Ask the vicious man, when he wills and chuses to pursue his lusts contrary to the convictions of his mind and conscience, whether his conscience be not still convinced that it is better to pursue virtue, that is, not only morally better, or more agreeable to the will of God, but it is naturally better as it conduces to a greater natural good, or final happiness: and he will frequently confess it, that considered as a natural good, the practice of virtue, with all its consequences of future or final happiness, is better than vice with its consequences of final misery: But his strong passions and present appetites hurry on his will to chuse vice before virtue, and thus contradict the dictates of the understanding or conscience concerning the greatest apparent good, both natural and moral. Mr. *Locke*, in his essay, book II. chapter 21. sections 35, 38, 43, 44. talks more copiously on this subject, and confirms what I have here expressed.

And let it be considered, that if things be not as I have here represented them, but if on the contrary the will cannot chuse vice unless the last dictate of the understanding determine that vice is at present the greatest apparent good, or vice is to be preferred and pursued, and if then the will must obey the understanding, and chuse sensual vices; then there is no such thing as sin against the convictions of the mind, or the last dictates of the understanding: which is a very absurd proposition, and contrary to all experience; and it frees the criminal from all blame even in the sight of God, who has formed his nature and his powers in this connexion.

3. My last reason to prove that the last dictate of the understanding, or the greatest apparent good, does not always determine the will, is, because sometimes two things are proposed to the will, wherein the understanding can give no dictate, because it sees no manner of difference, or at least no superior fitness, nor can possibly represent one as a greater good than another; and here the will cannot be determined by the understanding. Of this I shall say more afterward.

Other philosophers, and particularly Mr. *Locke* supposes uneasiness to be the great principle of all the determinations of the will. See his essay, book II. chapter 21. section 29, 33—39. But I think it may be proved that the will is not always determined by some uneasiness, as I shall shew immediately: yet by the way I may take notice, that wheresoever uneasiness doth determine the will, this does very little differ from the former principle, viz. that it is determined by the greatest apparent good; for this uneasiness proceeds, as Mr. *Locke* confesses, from the absence of some natural good; and the will determines itself to pursue this absent good, in order to remove this uneasiness. Thus it is good apprehended by the mind in its last dictates, that in these cases is still supposed to determine and direct the will.

Or thus: The removal of this present uneasiness is itself the greatest apparent good, and if the will be determined to act thus or thus for the removal of this present uneasiness, then it is still determined by the greatest apparent good.

In the 33. and 42. section, Mr. *Locke* himself grants, that it is "good that determines the will, though not immediately;" and his doctrine seems to be this, viz. that good, as it is apt to produce ease and pleasure in us, is the object of our desire; and

and it is this desire of good, raised by the present uneasiness in the want of it, that determines the will. Does it not then follow, that uneasiness is the remote mover of the will, and desire of good the proxime mover of it? I see no great difference betwixt this and the common opinion, nor ground enough for that great opposition between his doctrine in this point, and the common doctrine, which he seems to represent in two whole sections; for in the acts of the mind which are instantaneous, and many, as it were, are sometimes crouded into a moment, such as an uneasiness under the absence of good, and a desire of it's presence, &c. it is difficult sometimes to say, this or that is first or last: However in this place it is the view and desire of good is allowed to be the next and most immediate mover of the will, I think, by Mr. *Locke's* own arguing.

Mr. *Lee*, in his notes upon Mr. *Locke*, gives some probable arguments against his opinion, and proves that uneasiness is not the sole motive to voluntary actions.

This uneasiness, saith he, is a trouble, a kind of pain, a natural evil, and seems rather to be the spring of animal actions and of vicious acts, than of such as are exercises of virtue, and piety, and charity; and thus it is rather the motive to the wills of the worst or meanest of men, than to noble and virtuous spirits. So the fear of evil is the motive to the vilest of men to various actions and abstinences; but love to do as well as receive good, moves the best-constituted minds.

This doctrine of uneasiness seems to govern the actions of men by the principle of brutes, for they are carried by hunger and thirst and uneasiness towards their natural actions: therefore it is more honourable and safe to ascribe at least all virtuous actions to a diviner principle.

To this, let me add another reason or two, to make it more evident that this uneasiness can never be the universal and constant cause of determining the will.

Suppose a man is pleased, and easy, and perfectly satisfied in his present circumstances, be it in his present habitation, in his company, in his manner of life, in his trade and business, or any thing else; I would ask, What is it determines him to will his continuance in these circumstances, his abiding in the same habitation, his conversing with the same company, &c. ? Is it any uneasiness that determines him? Is it not rather his present easiness and sense of pleasure that moves him to will the continuance of his present ease? And Mr. *Locke* confesses this in section 34. Now I would ask whether a will to continue be not a volition, as well as a will to change.

Again, Is it uneasiness that determines the blessed God, and all the holy and happy spirits in heaven, to do what they do? Would it not have a profane sound to say; that present uneasiness determined God to make beasts and men, birds and flowers, to create a heaven and an earth? Can we believe that present uneasiness determines every angel to chuse and love God the chief good, or to will the several actions wherein he obeys his maker, and executes his orders? Or that it is some present uneasiness that causes the saints in heaven to perform their several acts of duty and adoration, or to will their continuance in the service and enjoyment of God?

Upon the whole, it is granted that these three principles, viz: "The greatest apparent good, the last dictate of the understanding, or the removal of present uneasiness," whether you suppose them distinct or the same, may have a persuasive influence so far as to prevail upon and to incline the will of men to far the greatest part of their volitions or acts of choice: But we have proved that these are not the universal and certain or necessary principles of all the will's determinations.

Let us enquire now whether there are not many instances wherein the will is determined neither by present uneasiness, nor by the greatest apparent good, nor by the



the last dictate of the understanding, nor by any thing else," but merely by itself as a sovereign and self-determining power of the soul: or whether the soul does not will this or that action in some cases, not by any other influence but because it will, and perhaps to shew it's own sovereignty or self-determining power. Let us put this case: Suppose I have a mind to prove to an atheist, or a fatalist, that I am a free being, for I can turn my face to the south or the north, I can point with my finger upward or downward, just as I please, and according as my soul wills; and that I have a power to will and chuse which of these motions I shall perform: Now if to demonstrate this freedom, I determine to move my finger upward, or turn my face to the north, it is not because I was under any present uneasiness by standing still without motion; nor was the pointing upward or the looking northward a greater apparent good than looking to the south or pointing downward: Nor could my understanding dictate one rather than the other: but it was a mere arbitrary volition, to shew that I have within me this self-determining power. And thus in some cases the will determines it's own actions in a very sovereign manner because it will, and without a reason borrowed from the understanding; and hereby it discovers it's own perfect power of choice rising from within itself, and free from all influence or restraint of any kind. And perhaps this may be as good a way to resolve some difficulties that relate to the actions of choice, and liberty of the will, either in God or in man, as any other laborious methods of solution which have not attained the desired success, nor satisfied the inquiring part of mankind. I will not deny but that I am indebted to archbishop *King* in his treatise of "the origin of evil," many years ago, for my first thoughts of this kind: And in my review of these papers, I am confirmed in these sentiments by an *english* translation of that book in quarto, with ingenious notes upon it by a writer who conceals his name, printed 1731 \*. Though I ask leave in some points to differ from the sentiments of the archbishop in that treatise.

### S E C T I O N III.

#### *The will is a self-determining power.*

**L**ET us see whether this doctrine of the self-determining power of the will may not be formed into a regular scheme, attended with various advantages, and guarded against the most formidable objections, in the following manner.

Proposition I. In every spirit or thinking being, whether perfect or imperfect, finite or infinite, there are two such principles or powers as may properly be distinguished by our conceptions, into the understanding and the will.

These are by no means to be conceived as two real substances or proper distinct beings; for it is one and the same spirit that both understands and wills: and yet we have very clear and distinct ideas of these two principles or powers of agency in ourselves, viz. We have a power of perceiving and assenting to truth, and of seeing and taking notice of the fitness or unfitness, the goodness or evil of things; this is called the understanding, or sometimes the mind: And we have also a power of willing or chusing one thing, and refusing another, of preferring one thing before another, of determining our choice to one thing rather than another; and this is called the will.

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\* Since this was written, there is another edition of that book in octavo, with valuable amplifications and corrections, and the learned author, Mr. *Edmund Law*, has no longer concealed his name.

As we are evidently and strongly conscious of these powers in ourselves, so we reasonably ascribe the same to other spirits, supposing them to be of a similar constitution: And we are taught also to form the same ideas of God, our maker, whom the light of nature and scripture represent to us as a spirit, and we are made after his image, as well as are his offspring. *John* iv. 24. *Gen.* i. 26. *Acts* xvii. 28.

Proposition II. The eternal reason and nature of things seems to point out this practical truth to us, or rather this rule of action, viz. that where a being is possessed of two such powers, one of them, viz. the understanding, which perceives the fitness or unfitness, good or evil of things, should be a director or guide to the other power which is active, viz. the will, that it may regulate and determine it's actions wisely, and chuse and refuse objects proposed to it according to the fitness or unfitness, good or evil which is discovered by the understanding: And that wheresoever greater degrees of fitness or goodness are discovered by the understanding in any object, there also the will should determine it's choice rather than to objects less fit, or less good.

Proposition III. But where there is no such superior fitness or goodness in things, or where it cannot be discovered by the understanding, but the objects which are proposed appear equally fit or good, there the will is left without a guide or director: And therefore it must make it's own choice only by it's own determination, it being properly a self-determining power. And in such cases the will does as it were make a good to itself by it's own choice, that is, creates it's own pleasure or delight in this self-chosen good; though it be not abstractly and in itself better, that is, fitter than it was before: Even as a man by seizing upon a spot of unoccupied land in an uninhabited country makes it his own possession and property, and as such rejoices in it. Where things were indifferent before, the will finds nothing to make them more agreeable than they were, considered merely in themselves, besides the pleasure it feels arising from it's own choice, and it's perseverance therein. We love many things which we have chosen, and purely because we chose them.

Let us survey these two cases supposed in the second and third propositions a little more particularly. And, first, let us consider the case where some superior fitness or goodness doth appear to the understanding.

Proposition IV. If the thinking being or spirit be wise or perfect, then it will act according to that eternal rule of action which rises from reason and the nature of things; that is, whatsoever the understanding apprehends and judges to have a greater or superior fitness or goodness in it, the will being guided by the understanding, prefers and determines itself to chuse it, and refuseth the things that appear less fit, as well as those which are unfit or evil. This it doth constantly and certainly, so far as the being is wise; for this is one chief thing wherein consists the perfection or wisdom of a spirit, viz. to chuse and prefer what appears to be fit and good above what is unfit or evil, and also to chuse that which is better or more fit, above that which has less fitness or goodness.

Proposition V. Though the will of intelligent beings is generally and should be always led or influenced by the greatest fitness and goodness of things wheresoever it appears to the understanding, yet it is not necessarily and absolutely determined thereby: for the will of an unwise being may possibly determine itself without regard to the understanding, and even contrary to what the mind judges to be fit or good.

And it may do this many ways, viz. by negligence, by sudden humour, caprice, or wantonness: The will through these influences may suddenly and rashly prefer



evil to good, or that which is less fit to what is more fit. Or the will may be tempted and led away to chuse what is not really good, by the enticing and soliciting powers of strong appetite or passion, contrary to the judgment of the understanding. It is true indeed, the will may chuse and determine to resist those importunate passions, but it is true also that it may obey them without regarding the mind, or in opposition to the better dictates of the understanding: For though the mind is given us for a director or adviser, yet not as an absolute lord or ruler. It is the will that is properly the moral principle or agent within us, the proper subject of virtue or vice, and therefore it must be a free and a self-determining power, and must chuse of itself, whether it will follow reason or appetite, judgment or passion.

And therefore it is, that whensoever the will determines contrary to the dictates of the understanding or conscience, it is both unwise and highly criminal; because such a spirit acts directly contrary to the light or law of nature, the great rule of reason, and the appearing fitness of things: And this gives just occasion to sharp reproaches and torments of conscience, when the will has determined contrary to the dictates of conscience, that is, of the understanding.

*Proposition VI.* Though sins against conscience are too frequently committed, yet the chief reason why imperfect beings so often chuse unfit or evil things, and prefer them to what are fit and good, is not merely from this negligent humour, or a wanton and capricious turn of the will, or the mere compliance with violent appetite or passion in determining it's choice contrary to appearing fitness or goodness, as represented by the understanding; but it arises perhaps most frequently from the understanding apprehending and judging some things to be fit or good upon a slight view of them, which really are not so, and from the will's inclination or wish, through the false bias of appetite or passion, that such a thing should be fit and good, before mature examination, and from it's determining to search no farther; the will precipitates the judgment, hurries it into error, and acts and chuses rashly upon present slight appearances.

And indeed in this case the will, which might yet longer suspend the judgment by putting the understanding upon a farther search, is criminal in permitting a judgment to pass on things upon such slight appearances of fitness or goodness, and determining it's choice according to them, instead of delay, and further search and enquiry.

Mankind, of whom I chiefly speak here, are often led astray in this matter by the false representations which passion and appetite, sense and fancy make of things to the understanding. We commit many mistakes about the fitness or goodness of things, by seeing them in a deceiving situation, in a false light, and under a disguise; by beholding things but in part and in an imperfect manner, by the numerous prejudices of many kinds that lead imperfect creatures astray in their judgment of things. And we are generally too ready to pass a rash and hasty judgment and determination of what is fit and good, before a thorough examination. We soon grow weary of a state of suspense and doubt about the fitness or goodness of things: and there is often found an impatience in the will to determine itself one way or another with speed, as well as an inclination that such a thing should appear fit and good according to the bias of sense and appetite; and thus it often chuses evil instead of good.

*Proposition VII.* Indeed, if we happen to pass a false judgment from the mere imperfection of our natural capacities, or under the influence of any of these prejudices which we had no manner of means nor power to resist or subdue; this mistake

of

of judgment, and the unhappy choice of the will according to it, seem to be innocent, and merit no blame.

But when we give up ourselves to a rash determination of judgment or choice under such prejudices as might be resisted, or when we yield to this impatience of the will, and wilfully neglect a further search where we might have justly delayed, and searched further, and by this means our will prefers real evil to good, or chuses things less fit before things which are more fit, we herein become culpable: And this faultiness hath greater or less degrees, according to the different opportunities, advantages, and capacities we had to examine, judge, and chuse aright.

And let it be observed, that as unwise spirits determine amiss in their judgment and choice of things, through haste or rashness, or through a sudden and strong bias of appetite or passion, &c. so a spirit which is wise may, through unwatchfulness, suffer itself to be betrayed into such a rash and false judgment, and such an unhappy and criminal action, and chuse evil instead of good. And perhaps this was the true spring of the fall of man from his state of innocence, and the entrance of sin into the world.

Hitherto we have spoken chiefly concerning the determination and choice of the will in those cases where the understanding represents one thing as fitter and better than another: But let us now consider the case supposed in the third proposition, where there is no such superior fitness or goodness, or where it doth not appear to the understanding.

**Proposition VIII.** There may be several things proposed to the understanding even of a wise and knowing, but imperfect, spirit, wherein the superior fitness or unfitness is concealed, and doth not sufficiently appear to the understanding, so as to give any just and certain direction to the will which of them to chuse or refuse. In some cases it is plain that the understanding, after all proper surveys and inquiries, is left in perfect suspense about the greater or lesser fitness of things, and the will may be perfectly indifferent to them: And yet the will may without fault or folly determine itself to chuse the one or the other: as for instance, if I am hungry, and two pieces of bread, or two cakes lie before me, which appear to be equally good for food, at equal distance from me, and in all other circumstances have no discernable inequality, so that I am intirely indifferent to either of them in particular, yet my will may determine itself to chuse and eat one of them to satisfy my hunger; but which of the two I shall chuse must be determined by the mere act of my will, for I cannot stay a hour in suspense and trifling inquiries. Perhaps one of these pieces of bread might be really in itself much fitter for my nourishment than the other; or, perhaps there might be secret poison in the one, and not in the other; but I knew it not; they were equal to me in appearance, and therefore I was not led to determine my choice by any superior appearance of fitness or goodness; yet my will determined itself to chuse one of them because it is a self-determining power, and hath perfect freedom of choice within itself: and herein there is nothing foolish or criminal, even though I should happen to be poisoned by it, by taking that piece which was unfit for my nourishment.

**Proposition IX.** As there may be several things proposed to a very wise and intelligent being, wherein he can discern no superior fitness or goodness, so there may be some things proposed wherein there is really no superior fitness or goodness at all; yet it may be fit at particular seasons that one of them should be chosen. This is a common case; as when two bricks, suppose them called A and B, lie before a builder, which are equally fit to fill up such a vacancy in the wall, and both lie equally



near his hand, and are equal in every other appearing circumstance; the builder must not stay a hour to debate with himself, and to determine which brick to chuse for filling up this vacancy; that would be folly indeed: But his will freely and of itself chuses the brick A, merely because he will, and leaves B, or refuses it: Then, as I hinted before, this brick A becomes so far better by his chusing it, as that he approves of it in it's place in the building above any other, and delights in his own choice or work.

Or take another instance: Suppose a man be desired to shew his power in self-determination, or of pointing with his finger, and he points to the north, or to the east, to the heavens or to the earth; here is no superior fitness or unfitness in the one or the other; but he points upward, or northward, as he pleases; his will determines for no other reason but because he will, and hereby shews his own self-determining power in all this; though it be perfectly arbitrary, yet there is nothing foolish or faulty.

We may find instances of this kind in moral actions as well as natural: Suppose God requires *Abraham* to offer a lamb out of his flock in sacrifice, and *Abraham* taking a survey of the twenty fattest lambs of his flock, cannot find which is the best of them; his own will must finally determine and chuse any one of them for the altar. Or let it be supposed that I have ten farthings in my purse, and I meet with a dozen beggars, all so equally poor and miserable, that I cannot discern which is the most or which is the least indigent: I must necessarily leave two of these men out of my distribution, but my understanding cannot direct me which these two are, nor can it tell me which are the ten fittest objects of my charity. What can determine my choice here but my own will by it's self-determining power?

The understanding in such instances as these, has no pretence of power to direct or determine the will, because it sees no superior fitness, and the will would be for ever undetermined, if it did not determine itself.

#### S E C T I O N IV.

##### *How the will of God determines itself.*

**N**OW let us try to apply these things to the great and blessed God in his counsels and actions; always remembering, that when we speak of these divine and unsearchable themes, we do not pretend nor assume so much as to determine that things must be literally just so transacted in the divine counsels, but that we speak of God as acting according to the manner of men, and so far as our ideas can reach those sublimities.

Proposition X. The great God, whose understanding is perfect, sees all the real and possible fitnesses and unfitnesses, good or evil, which are in things, as they are contained in his own eternal ideas: He beholds all that is fit or unfit, whether the things themselves are actually existent, or only possible, because he sees all the infinite relations of things to one another with all their consequences in a simultaneous and comprehensive view.

Here note, that I do not meddle with the debate whether there can be any fitness or goodness in things antecedent to or abstracted from the being of a God. Had there not been a God, there had never actually existed such real fitnesses, nor such ideas at all. Yet it is certain we may conceive of such fitnesses antecedently to our conception of the being of a God. This is plain and evident, that God is eternal, and his

his ideas are eternal, and these fitnesses of things also are eternal: and perhaps these fitnesses of things can have no original existence nor eternity but in the divine ideas, and consequently are included in the unchangeable nature of God.

And this is one argument whereby, as I remember, the late ingenious Mr. Norris somewhere proves the being of a God; viz. that there are certain eternal truths or propositions, natural, mathematical and moral, such as, "three and three make six; two parallel lines will never meet; the whole is greater than any of its parts; and God is to be honoured by his intelligent creatures." Now these eternal unchangeable truths are not a mere nothing, and therefore they must have an eternal existence somewhere, and this cannot be but in some eternal mind, which is God. But however that matter be resolved, this is certain, that all these eternal fitnesses lie open to the divine mind, and are part of his unchangeable ideas, which is all that my present argument requires.

Proposition XI. When we consider or speak of the decrees of God, or his determinations what he will do, or what he will not do, we are constrained to acknowledge that his will always chuses and determines to act what is fit and good: that is, in our way of conceiving, wheresoever there is an eternal fitness or unfitness, good or evil in things, he always determines to act according to this fitness, and this goodness; for to act an unfit thing would be unwise, and to act a thing which is evil, would not be good; whereas the blessed God is perfectly wise and perfectly good in all his works and his decrees, in his creation and providence, and government of the world; he is faithful to his promises, he is righteous and just in his determinations, he is kind in his conduct towards his creatures so far as the rules of wisdom and justice admit: Nor is it possible that God should be or act otherwise than according to this fitness, where there is any fitness or goodness in things, since these eternal and unchangeable fitnesses exist in his ideas, and for God to act against them, would be unfit and unwise, and unbecoming the character and nature of a God.

Proposition XII. For the same reason his will exerting itself in a way of government, determines all the rules of moral virtue and piety for the practice of his creatures, according to the original and eternal fitness of things, wheresoever there is such an eternal fitness. As for instance, that "God our creator is to be honoured and loved, and worshipped, and obeyed; that promises and contracts are to be fulfilled; that one man must not take away another man's life or property by force or fraud," &c. All which are moral propositions of eternal truth.

Proposition XIII. God has made these moral rules known to men to be his will: two ways, viz. by reason and by revelation.

1. "By reason," that is, by forming their natural powers of thinking and reasoning in such a manner, that when they set themselves to a careful and due consideration of the relation of God to his creatures, and of creatures to one another, they cannot but infer these propositions to be true, and to be most proper rules to govern their practice; and that God, who has formed their reasoning powers in this manner, has hereby made these things their duty. As our reason is so formed, that in natural things it is impossible we should judge otherwise than that "three and three make six, or the whole is greater than a part;" so in moral things we cannot judge otherwise, when we have the idea of a God, than "that God our maker is to be honoured and worshipped," &c. And when our reason judges thus, then it appears to be the will of God, and we are obliged to perform and obey it as our maker's will.

2. "By revelation," or scripture, God has also manifested these rules of moral virtue or natural religion, and thus confirmed the law of nature or dictates of reason, and given



given a double discovery of these duties to those who live where this revelation is published, and a double obligation to the performance of them.

Here let it be observed, that I enter not into the controversy, Whether these moral propositions about eternal fitnesses of things would have the force of laws, and carry any proper obligation with them upon the mind and will of man without the consideration of the existence of God, and of his will thus found out by our reasoning powers. I am rather inclined to think that it is the will of God as manifested by reason or revelation, which lays the true and proper moral obligation on the practice of intelligent creatures; but I avoid the embarrassing my present scheme of thoughts with that dispute. It is evident enough, that in the grand lines of moral virtue and piety there are these eternal fitnesses; and our reasoning powers, when they have found out the being of a God, and our relation to him, must also acknowledge they are so far the will of God, that we are obliged to practise according to these moral fitnesses, these eternal rules of virtue.

Proposition XIV. But there may be several things supposed to come within the view of the divine mind, or the understanding of God, considered as a Creator, which have no real fitness or goodness in themselves, or at least which have all an equal fitness or equal goodness to answer any general or special design of God: And if they are considered in all the various relations in which they stand either to God himself, or to other things in the universe, there is no real superior fitness or goodness in any of them above the rest, so that they appear perfectly indifferent in the divine ideas.

Now in such instances the will of God, as a sovereign agent, has no determination from his own ideas, and therefore in and of itself determines itself to chuse one thing and not another; and, as it were, makes that thing good, that is, makes it pleasing to himself, by his own determination or choice of it. Wheresoever the infinite knowledge of God sees no goodness nor evil in the ideas of things themselves, he can make them so far good by fixing his own free-will and choice upon them, that they then are agreeable and pleasing because of his free choice, which before were entirely indifferent. And I think we may, without injury to the dignity of godhead, suppose him to be better pleased now with those his works which he has actually wrought or determined into actual existence, than with those which he has left in the state of mere possibility, though antecedent to this determination they might be both equally fit or good.

And indeed there seems to be a great number of instances of this kind relating to God and his works: as, What sort of system of beings he would make, and whether minds, bodies, or both; What should be the precise shape, and what the precise place of every corporeal being in the world; Whether this whole universe, or the sun in our system, should have one atom in it more or less; Whether the whole or any part of it should have been created one moment sooner or later; In what precise spot of our solar world *Jupiter* or *Saturn*, or any of their satellites, or this earth or it's moon should be first placed; or whether any of them should have one particle of matter more or less in them, than they have, or this or that particle lie in any other situation; Whether this single atom of mould or clay should be part of the glebe at *Taunton* or *York*, or whether this grain of sand or pebble should be found on the shore of *Deal* or *Dover*, or on the coasts of *Africa* or the *East-Indies*\*; Whether this particle of water should belong to the *Severn* or the *Thames*, or

\* I have dwelt too long perhaps on such minute and inconsiderable instances as these; but I did it partly to intimate how universally the great God is laid under necessary and minute limitations, if these things were not indifferent; and partly to give occasion to diffuse our thoughts into like instances in the animate, human, and angelic worlds, which perhaps are as little and indifferent in the esteem of God, as these minute inconsiderables are in our esteem.

should be blowing this moment in the *atlantic* or the *mediterranean* sea; or whether this particle of air should be found in *Essex* or *Hertsfordshire*, or in *America* on this day, this hour, and this second of time: On what particular branch such a bird should sit at such a minute, and what notes it should sing; and how many leaves should grow on such a bough, and how many indentings on the edge of every leaf; how many colours should glow on the cheek of such a tulip, or yellow seeds lie in the bosom of a rose; whether this particular human soul should be united to a body born in *Lapland* or *Russia*, *Britain* or *China*; or this child should be created for a tall stature or a dwarf, or be brought into the world in the seventh or seventeenth century; whether this drop of rain should fall upon a plowed field or a rock, or this bright sun-beam should light on me or my neighbour, on the earth or the moon: And perhaps ten thousand other things, and that of much greater importance in their consequences, may have no superior fitness or unfitness in themselves, but are all equal and all indifferent. And here the will of God, by and of itself, as a free and sovereign power, determines itself in it's choice, and as it were makes it so far more agreeable and good to himself by his own choice and determination, and he delights in his own will and purpose, and in the correspondent works of his hands.

Proposition XV. When God out of mere sovereignty and good pleasure hath determined by his will to chuse and create one sort of world or system of things out of two or two thousands which perhaps were equally fit, or to make this or that sort of creatures in this world; he then may be said to be led by the nature and relations of those things, and by consequential proper fitnesses which belong to that system, or to those creatures; to determine those things of a natural or moral kind, which are proper for those creatures, or for that system. As for instance: Supposing just such a world to be created as our's is, then perhaps consequentially it must have such laws of motion: Or, if man be created exactly such a being as he is, then it is proper that he should have such ideas, such notions and sentiments, &c. and that he should live under such certain laws and rules of action.

But perhaps several of these are not eternal laws or rules either of nature, or motion, or morality to other sorts of creatures, or other systems which God might have chosen to create. Therefore though we may assert some to be eternal laws or rules for all possible worlds, yet it is hard for us to say in all cases, how far these eternal fitnesses extend. And we have reason enough to suppose that many things even in our present system of nature are not determined from their eternal superior fitness; but that thousands of possibles even in our system might be equally fit in themselves, and it was the will of God, the Creator, that sovereignly chose some particulars above others, and made them actually exist, and behold they are all very good.

Proposition XVI. So when we consider God as a governor in appointing such positive laws and rules of duty for his creatures, which are not contained in the law of nature, there may be instances wherein among a thousand possible rules or laws each of them may be fit, and yet there is no superior fitness in one above the rest: Then the will of God by and of itself determines and chuses what positive laws, what duties he will command or prescribe to his creatures, and he makes the thing which he prescribes more fit and good for us to practise merely by his own choice, determination, and command: as whether the tabernacle of *Moses* should have just such a number of boards or curtains, pins or tacks in it; whether every board or every curtain should be just so long and so broad, to the thousandth part of an inch; whether the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, the red heifer, and the whole burnt-offering on the great day of atonement, should have every the least ceremony of washings, burnings,



burnings, sprinklings, &c. belonging to them, so precisely adjusted in that very form as they are appointed in the books of *Moses* &c. I would ask whether every point and tittle of every ceremony and positive duty which God has appointed from the beginning of the world to this day, had in itself and in the nature of things, such a superior fitness, that it could not be determined otherwise: Surely it is much more becoming and proper for us to think and say, that God has determined these things by his own will or self-determining power and free choice: For it seems to me a very harsh and bold affirmation, that not one of all these punctilio's could ever have been otherwise appointed by God himself, as we shall take notice immediately.

Proposition XVII. Thus whether we consider man as a natural or a moral agent, and whether we consider God either as a Creator or as a governor, there seem to be several instances wherein there is no superior fitness or unfitness of things, that appears to the understanding to give any direction to the will in it's choice: And as the nature of the will in itself is a power of choice or self-determination, so in these instances it eminently appears that it must be left to determine and chuse for itself without any direction of the understanding.

## S E C T I O N V.

*The advantages of this scheme of liberty.*

**T**HIS scheme of the liberty of the will, and of the spring of it's choice and determination, as residing within itself, has many advantages attending it; and they are such as these.

Advantage I. We are hereby led evidently to a self-moving power, to a principle of motion or proper action in man, which we are conscious of continually, and which we feel and experience in ourselves to be the active spring of those voluntary motions which we excite in our own bodies, and thereby in the bodies that are round about us: And this leads us by fair reasoning to infer, that since we neither did nor could give being to ourselves, to our self-moving powers, or to other creatures, there must be some such supreme self-moving power which is the author and Creator both of bodies and spirits, that is, of all active and passive beings.

Whereas the contrary opinion, which supposes the will to be always necessarily determined by the understanding, and the understanding always determined by the appearances of things, gives us no discovery of any self-moving principle or power in this world; and while the same opinion supposes the will of God to be in the same manner universally, eternally and unalterably moved and determined by the appearances of things in his ideas, and their superior fitness, it gives perhaps too much advantage to the atheist and the sceptic to doubt whether there be any self-moving power at all or no, whether there be any first-moving spirit, that is, a God. This doctrine has in fact been employed to this wretched purpose.

Advantage II. This opinion asserts and attributes the most proper and most rational doctrine of full freedom to every intelligent creature, and conveys a clear idea of their liberty both in those spontaneous actions where the fitness of things so fully and evidently appears, as powerfully to persuade the will, as well as in all other actions where the fitness doth not appear with such full evidence and power, or finally in those things where there is no superior fitness at all appearing. Every action determined by the will of man is free, because the will is a self determining power.

Whereas

Whereas in the other scheme, which supposes that the will of man in every action whatsoever is certainly and necessarily determined by the last dictate or judgment of the understanding, and that the understanding is necessarily determined in it's judgment by present appearances of things as to their fitness or unfitness, there is really no perfect liberty of indifference or freedom of choice left to man, or to any intelligent being in any action; but all is necessary with a natural necessity, all is fate; for nothing can be otherwise than it is: And this opinion has given an unhappy occasion to the principles of the fatalists in all ages.

Advantage III. This scheme of things supposes the truth of what we daily find in common life, that there are many objects and actions which are equal or indifferent to us, and which have no appearing superior fitness or goodness in them; and yet it gives us leave to enjoy the pleasure of any of these indifferent objects or actions by the free choice and self-determining power of the will. Whereas if the will must always be determined in it's choice by some superior appearing goodness or fitness, we could never come to enjoy any of the satisfactions that may arise from these equal and indifferent actions or objects, because we should be held in everlasting suspense between them, as the ass in the problem between two like and equal thistles, and never be able to taste one of them, having nothing that could determine our choice.

Advantage IV. This doctrine of the self-determining power of the will sets the nature and distinction of virtue and vice in this present state in the truest light, together with the rewardable or punishable properties thereof: This shews how acceptable to God are the good actions of men, as being the effects of free choice; the will having always a natural, free and self-determining power of it's own choice, even after things are represented to the understanding in their fitness or unfitness, in their good or evil appearances: And at the same time it lays the fault of every criminal action only upon the creature, by allowing the will to have a natural free power either to determine suddenly and rashly, and to precipitate the judgment concerning the fitness of things, and thus betray itself into a wrong choice; and by allowing it a free power also to suspend the judgment of the understanding in opposition to any slight appearances of fitness or goodness, and to search yet further, and wait for further evidence.

This scheme also fixes the guilt of evil actions entirely on the will of the creature, by ascribing to the will a free power to determine itself, either to chuse or to refuse after any representations of good or evil, fitness or unfitness made by the understanding: This doctrine therefore sets vice and virtue in their true natures, their merit or demerit, and represents them as suited to their different rewards.

Whereas the other scheme, which determines the will always and certainly by the understanding, and determines the understanding by the situation and appearance of things, seems to take away the true nature and distinction of vice and virtue; for the sublimest virtues and the vilest of vices actually practised would rather be matters of fate and necessity, flowing naturally and necessarily from the existence, the circumstances, and present situation of persons and things: For this existence and situation necessarily makes such an appearance to the mind; from this appearance flows a necessary perception and judgment concerning these things; this judgment necessarily determines the will; and thus by this chain of necessary causes virtue and vice would lose their nature, and become natural ideas and necessary things, instead of moral and free actions; and thus there would be nothing really rewardable in the one, or blameable and punishable in the other. This also the atheists and the fatalists have formed into so strong an argument, as it is very difficult to give a fair answer to them, if we



suppose the will to be necessarily determined in every act by the ideas and assent of the understanding.

To confirm this notion of virtue and vice proceeding from the self-determining power of the will; let us consider, that all mankind naturally and constantly suppose the determinations of their wills to be their own actions, whether they be good or evil: for however they might, from a principle of pride and vanity, assume the honour of good actions to themselves, though they were not intirely their own, yet they would not impute evil actions to themselves, if they did not feel themselves to be the proper cause of them by the free determinations of their own will. The soul or conscience of man charges him with acting amiss, when his will has chosen that which is evil, and brought misery upon himself; and hence arise sharp and bitter inward reflexions, and sorrows of another kind than those which proceed from mere calamities which were necessary, and which he could not avoid. Nor can we suppose the God of nature would have placed such a principle in mankind, as should naturally excite him to bitter anguish and self accusation for actions which were naturally necessary, that is, if he were determined to them necessarily by his perceptions, and in which his will had no self-determining power or choice.

Advantage V. This doctrine of the self-determining power of the will, shews us a wise and good man in his true character, viz. whose will, though it be a self-determining power, and can chuse contrary to the understanding, and can obey the influences of appetite and sinful passion, yet it suffers itself to be directed and always determines it's choice by the fitness or unfitness of things, as they are represented by the understanding after a due examination and survey, wheresoever this fitness or unfitness appears. And in this conduct he imitates the blessed God, who never acts contrary to these appearances of fitness or unfitness, never determines any thing contrary to the eternal reasons and relations of things as contained in his own ideas, but always chuses and acts in conformity to them.

Advantage VI. This gives us the clearest, the easiest, and the most unexceptionable account how sin came first into the world. Man in paradise was wise and innocent, but imperfect and in a state of trial. Sense, or appetite, or passion, or all these together, joined with the devil in the serpent to make a false representation of things to his understanding, without giving him sufficient evidence to have determined his judgment on their side, and influenced his choice: Then his will, which ought to have suspended his judgment till he had made further search and enquiry, did in some heedless and unwatchful moment, rashly suffer the soul to assent to falshood, and as rashly and hastily followed these false representations, and determined it's choice to evil instead of good.

Or we may suppose, that the will being tempted and inticed strongly by appetite and passion, both by an inordinate sensual appetite to the forbidden fruit, and inordinate desire of knowledge and ambition of being as a god, determined itself rashly, without delay and enquiry, to obey and comply with the strong bias of present appetite and passion, without waiting for a mature judgment of the understanding; and thus man chose what was evil, and disobeyed his maker: And herein man appeared highly criminal in his first sin, and the fault must be laid entirely upon himself, because it was a free act of his will, which was a self-determining power. And indeed there is no such thing as actual sin, properly speaking, but in free acts of the will.

Whereas if we suppose the understanding to be necessarily determined to judge according to the appearances of things, and the will necessarily to follow the judgment of the understanding; then the blame will be ready to be cast on the providence of God

God which placed *Adam* in such circumstances, as that such false representations should be made to his understanding which he could not avoid, and which would necessarily first determine his judgment, and consequently his choice of evil, and his disobedience to his maker.

I will not assume so much as to pretend this is the only way whereby we can account for *sin's* coming into the world, and making it's first entrance into the innocent heart of the first man; but I think this gives as fair and easy a solution of it, as any that I have found.

Advantage VII. This doctrine shews us the excellency and rewardableness of faith in the gospel of *Christ*, and the criminal nature of unbelief. When the christian revelation is proposed to man as coming from God, it becomes man as a rational creature to consider the proofs and evidences brought to confirm it, the prophecies, the miracles, the internal excellencies, and all external testimonies that come with it: And it is the will which must employ and determine the mind to dwell upon these enquiries diligently and faithfully, in proportion to the merits of the cause, to keep the heart sincere and unbiassed in the enquiry, to attend carefully to every gleam of light, and every argument, and to suffer itself to be convinced, at last, by the preponderating weight of reasoning, laying aside every prejudice of flesh and mind, of appetite and passion, of pride and self-sufficiency, of antiquity and novelty, of education and company, &c. and not to pass a judgment without such evidence as appears to be just and sufficient. This is a work of self-denial and sincerity, diligence and labour, to keep the mind in a wise suspense till arguments appear convincing, and then to yield up all it's former mistakes and prejudices to this conviction. This is truly rewardable in the sight of God. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." *John* xi. 29.

On the other hand, it is the will of man that hath the chief hand in infidelity: It is the will that indulges prejudices against the gospel, it refuses to apply and hold the mind close to a diligent and faithful survey of it with all it's evidences; or it wisheth the gospel may not be true, because it restrains it's appetites or evil inclinations; or it determines against it rashly upon slight and insufficient grounds; it indulges an aversion to it without reason, and thereby becomes culpable, and is justly punishable. "He that believeth not shall be damned." *Mark* xvi. 16.

Whereas the contrary opinion, which makes faith or unbelief, assent or dissent to the gospel, and acceptance or rejection of it, to be the necessary effect of present appearances of things to the understanding, and supposes things necessarily to appear according to the circumstances and situation in which they are placed, without interesting the free will and choice of man at all in the matter of faith or unbelief; this opinion, I say, goes a great way toward the excusing of infidelity as innocent, and taking away the virtuous character and rewardableness of faith in the gospel.

Advantage VIII. This doctrine of the self determining power of the will allows the blessed God a full freedom of choice in distributing his favours to which of his creatures he pleases, and in what degrees. It lays a just foundation of praise and thankfulness for all the free actions of his goodness and kindness to his creatures, according to those degrees of mercy and bounty which he distributes among them; because he is not obliged to all those particular actions or objects by a necessary and superior fitness, since he might have chosen to neglect those objects, or to manifest equal or superior goodness to other creatures, or to do it in much less degrees, or in other ways and manners, any of which might have been equally fit and proper: as for instance, God might have brought forth the soul of an *american* savage in the *british*



islands, surrounded with light and knowledge; or have produced me among the savages in *America* in gross darkness, as well as in *Great Britain*, a land of light. My soul might have been united to a body born of *african* idolaters; he might have made me blind and a cripple, as well as given me health and eye-sight; I might have had the brain of an ideot, and been bred up without knowledge, as well as enjoyed my share of intellectual powers and advantages of learning; he might have formed me the child of a beggar, made me a heir to filth and wretchedness, and trained me up to ask my bread from door to door, instead of the comfortable circumstances which I enjoy, and the parents from whence I came. We cannot but suppose it possible for the great God to have found a way to have made these things comport with his grand scheme and counsels in the universe, if he had so pleased; but he has chosen and determined better things for me from his own free will and sovereign goodness, and blessed be his name.

Advantage IX. This doctrine manifests and maintains the just distinction between the moral and positive commands of God, while we suppose his moral commands and prohibitions to be drawn from the eternal fitness or unfitness of things; whereas his positive commands and prohibitions are for the most part, if not entirely, the free and arbitrary determinations of his will and choice.

I do not call them arbitrary, as though God had no reason at all for appointing them, or that they are not suited to attain very happy and divine purposes in the grand scheme of his counsels; but they are arbitrary in this respect, that he might have chosen and appointed other positive commands or prohibitions, which might have been equally fit, and have attained purposes as happy and glorious, and which he might have introduced with equal reason: For it is very hard to suppose, as I hinted above, that every punctilio and all the little circumstances of every positive command and prohibition of God throughout all the ages of his church, patriarchal, *jewish* and christian, were determined by the necessary superior fitness of them. I shall enquire immediately, whether any thing more than this can be said concerning his moral commands; and then what difference is there between the one and the other?

Advantage X. This scheme of the self-determining power of the will represents the doctrine of the freedom of man's will, and the power and prevalence of divine grace in a most happy harmony and consistency, perhaps beyond what any other scheme can represent. Suppose God decree and determine to convert such a sinner as *Onesimus* to faith and holiness: he can represent to his understanding, by his own word, and by the additional operation of his own Spirit, the fitness and goodness of faith in *Christ*, and true repentance, in such a superior light, as he who knows the hearts and sentiments, the circumstances and situations of all men, doth certainly foreknow will be not only sufficient but effectual to influence and persuade the will of *Onesimus* to comply with it: And yet perhaps God need not mechanically or physically, necessarily or irresistibly move and constrain the will of the creature to comply. And though the will is left to its own free agency and self-determining power, yet the light in which God sets the gospel before the eyes of the mind is so great, as will finally and certainly persuade the will, though not necessarily impel or constrain it. And the great God, who knows intimately the make and constitution of our natures, and our present situation, sees clearly that this light will be finally effectual to influence the will freely to comply with the proposals of grace.

Thus the virtuous and pious actions of men are praise-worthy and rewardable, and approve themselves to their own consciences as well as to God, the righteous governor and judge; because the will had a natural self-determining power to chuse the contrary.

contrary. And yet these good actions may be effectually secured as to their performance, by such a powerful representation of divine things to the understanding, as God foreknows will certainly, though not necessarily, be an occasion of the final free determination of the will to piety and virtue; and thus also the free favour or grace of God stands entitled to it's due and divine honours.

It is the opinion of a considerable writer on this subject, that herein lies a great deal of the pleasure of a self-approving conscience, that the good man had a power to chuse an evil object or action, but he actually refused it, and chose the good. And herein God, as as a judge and rewarder, shews his equity, in giving happiness to the man of virtue. Whereas if the divine power physically and irresistibly move and determine the will to chuse what is good, this would make the divine illumination of the mind needless, since the will might then be moved to chuse virtue without it: This, say some, would do violence to nature, would quite invert the method of treating free agents; and many other evil consequences are reckoned up by some authors. Now I would only enquire whether all these are not avoided by supposing the influence of the grace of God upon the soul of man to be only illuminative and persuasive, and yet finally efficacious and certain; which efficacy and certainty seem to be taught us by the express and evident language of several scriptures. Whether these scriptures do certainly imply an immediate and physical influence of divine power on the will, to give it a new general bias and inclination over and above this efficacious illumination of the mind, I leave to be determined by divines, always supposing it to be as effectual on the will, as if it were immediate, and the final event to be as certain.

If any person suggest here, that all the powers of the soul, viz. the will and affections, are grievously corrupted and perverted by the fall of man, and therefore there is need of an almighty physical or supernatural influence on them as well as on the understanding, in order to give them a new bias, and change them to holiness; I would also suggest in my turn, and enquire, whether such a transcendent and supernatural illumination of the understanding may not be the proper and usual divine method of renewing the will and affections, and sufficient to produce such a glorious change in them as the scripture describes and makes necessary to the salvation of sinners? Though the will of man be still a free agent here, yet the grace of God has all the glory in this work of conversion, inasmuch as the first work on the mind is entirely owing to grace, and without it the corrupt will would feel no such change. But I enter no further into this subject here.

## S E C T I O N VI.

### *Objections answered.*

**T**HE chief objections which are raised against this scheme, are these that follow.

Objection I. It is granted in this scheme, that wheresoever there is a superior fitness of things, the will of a wise being is generally, if not universally determined or guided in it's choice by this superior fitness: But where no such superior fitness appears to the understanding, there indeed the understanding cannot represent one thing as fitter than another, nor determine the choice of the will; but then it may said, a thousand other things may determine it, without allowing the will such a self-determining



determining power. As in the instance given, suppose two cakes to be proposed to a hungry man, though they are both equal and alike, yet his will may be determined by some situation of one cake in point of light, and reflexion of lights or colours, or by it's nearness to the right hand of the man, or some minute imperceptible motions or impressions made on the body of the man, either on his eyes, on his smell, on his brain or imagination, or some accidental turn of the nerves, of his arm or hand, or something in the air or circumjacent bodies, or some attending circumstances; any of these may determine his will, or determine his hand to take one of these cakes rather than the other, without making the will such a self-determining power as this scheme supposes.

Answer I. If the will do not determine itself, then it must be determined to chuse one of these cakes by suasion, or by mechanism: If by suasion, then it must be by some motive derived from a superior fitness for one of them to be chosen: But this is contrary to the original supposition that they are both equal, and that the senses or the understanding find no difference. If it be by mechanism that the man is led to chuse one of the cakes, then it is a mere action of the animal or brutal part, and not the choice of the man; and thus the will does nothing, or has no share in it, or at most only chuses afterward what the hand hath first chosen, which is contrary to obvious experience.

If a parallel case were proposed in the world of spirits, in which there is no mechanism, such a spirit would remain for ever undetermined any way, though it were a matter of importance to the welfare of that spirit to be determined some one way; and the will of that spirit could not possibly chuse what was so very necessary to it's welfare, and so very easy to obtain, merely for want of superior fitness in one of the things proposed: But it is a very absurd conception, that the blessed God should so form the nature of a spirit, and make it so impotent to chuse what is necessary to it's welfare, and should keep it in everlasting suspense in matters of moment and importance. I might answer in the second place,

Answer II. If all determinations of the will are effected by superior fitness, or by mere mechanism of the body, in either of these cases there is no freedom of choice, no real liberty of indifference in any human action: It is all pure natural necessity that determines the will; and in all these common instances in human life, natural liberty or freedom of choice is entirely lost, and the scheme of fatality is introduced; and how absurd that is, will appear in the following section.

Objection II. The doctrine which has been proposed, depends in a great measure upon this supposition, that the will can determine itself without any prior reason borrowed from things, to chuse one thing out of two or more, which are perfectly equal; but this seems to be impossible: for it is a plain axiom of truth, that "nothing is or comes to pass without a sufficient reason why it is, or why it is in this manner rather than in another." Now, if two things are perfectly equal in all circumstances, there is no sufficient reason why one should be, or why the will of God or man should chuse it; and consequently the will would never chuse nor be determined one way rather than another. If a true balance has equal weights, the scales will for ever hang equal, and neither one nor the other rise or sink, because there is no sufficient reason why one should weigh down the other. Thus it is and would be evidently with the will of man, in case two such equal objects were proposed, whereof one had no more fitness or goodness than the other: And it would be the same thing with the will of God; for if there were not one best or fittest scheme or system of worlds, he would have never chosen or determined to make any world at all; for

as without a sufficient reason nothing can be, so the infinitely wise being never determines himself to act without a sufficient reason.

Answer. Scales and balances, and all other things besides a spirit or being endowed with a will, are, properly and philosophically speaking, passive beings; and therefore they must have some other reason or cause from without, sufficient to determine them one way rather than another, before they can be determined: But spirits are beings of an active nature, the spring of action is a real something within themselves, and by which they can determine themselves. The will of God is an active and self-determining power; and the will of man perhaps in this respect is the chief image of God in this lower world, as it is an active power that can determine itself. Why must all beings and all their powers be supposed to be passive, and be determined by something extrinsic?

It is granted indeed, that the will sometimes borrows a reason for its determination from various occasions or arguments: Sometimes from very strong motives, and the transcendently superior fitnesses of things; sometimes from weaker motives, where the fitness of things does but just appear superior; and sometimes itself determines its own choice between things in themselves indifferent, and where there is no superior fitness at all, or at least none that appears.

Yet let it be again observed here, as I have intimated before, that when two equal things are proposed to the will, there may be a very sufficient reason why it should determine its choice in general some way or other, though there be no sufficient reason in the things themselves for determining in this way rather than that. There is very sufficient reason why a hungry man should eat, when two equal pieces of bread lie before him; but he may chuse which piece he will eat, without any other reason than because he will. So there may be very sufficient reason why God should create a world; but if you ask why he should create this sort of world rather than another, and this sort of creatures rather than others, which may be equally fit, he borrows the reason for it only from himself; his own good pleasure is a sufficient reason: He doth it because he will; nor is any other reason necessary besides his own self-determining power. It is supremely fit he should do what he pleases. Why must the will of God be such a passive power as is not able to act of and from itself?

Objection III. This doctrine of liberty represents the will of an intelligent being as a sort of blind power determining itself without reason in many instances, acting without any motive, chusing and preferring one thing to another without any ground of choice or preference; whereas in all intelligent beings, whether God or man, there are no such blind principles of choice or action.

Answer I. It is granted indeed, that this doctrine does not ascribe understanding, or sight and perception to the will, for that would be to confound those two distinct powers or principles in a spirit: But this doctrine keeps those two powers of understanding and will in their proper characters; the understanding sees or perceives truth and falsehood, fitness and unfitness, good and evil, as far as any such characters or qualities appear, and the will freely determines and chuses after this perception, as it pleases. Generally indeed, and according to nature, the will receives direction for its own choice or determination from the perceptions of the understanding, where superior fitness or goodness appears: In an unwise being it does not certainly and constantly so chuse or determine: In a wise and good being it always chuses according to this appearing fitness. But where this superior fitness or goodness



ness either is not, or does not appear, what can possibly remain, but that the will of the wisest being must forbear to chuse, act and determine at all, or else it must determine, chuse and act of itself and from itself?

Answer II. Let it be remembered here, what has been hinted in some of the former sections, that though the understanding and will are not improperly represented as two distinct powers of a spirit, yet they are not two distinct beings or substances: It is one and the same spirit, the same intelligent and rational being that both understands and wills, that perceives the fitness or goodness of things, and that generally acts or chuses according to this preception: And therefore this one spirit, this rational being which has the determining power as well as the perceptive power, and which properly determines and chuses as well as perceives, is no such blind agent as the objection represents.

And yet it must be acknowledged, that where the fitness or unfitness, the good or evil of things does not appear to this rational being, or this spirit, where it can discover no superior fitness or goodness, there it must act by it's own choice, and determine itself as it pleases, when it has no other guide or rule for self-determination: And the matter of fact in many instances is so plain as not to be denied. When two cakes lie before a hungry man, in which no manner of difference appears either in the colour, situation, quantity or inviting qualities of them, it is indeed his hunger is the motive which really determines him to eat one of them; and it is a rational, and not a blind irrational action to take one of these cakes and eat it. The man is guided by reason, so far as reason can possibly guide him. But when reason utterly ceases to guide or direct the man, because of the equality of the two cakes, there it must be merely the self-moving power or the will of this rational being which determines which of the two cakes he shall eat, because there is no superior motive or reason to chuse one rather than the other. One might say the same concerning two new guineas, or new halfpence offered to our choice.

In such a case, I plainly feel myself to determine my own choice in and of myself, and I am conscious of no superior motive, I know of nothing without me that makes me prefer one to the other: Now is it possible that I can be determined by a superior motive or moral cause, of which I have no manner of knowledge, no consciousness, no idea? Is this a motive? Is this suasion or moral causality?

In this place I cannot forbear to cite what I lately read, upon my review of these essays, in the notes on archbishop King's treatise on the origin of evil. "To argue still that some minute imperceptible causes, some particular circumstances in our own bodies, or those about us, must determine even these seemingly indifferent actions, is either running into the absurdity of making us act upon motives which we do not apprehend; or saying that we act mechanically, that is, do not act at all: And in the last place, to say, that we are determined to chuse any of these trifles just as we happen to fix our thoughts upon it in particular at the very instant of action, is either attributing all to the self-moving power of the mind, which is granting the question; or else referring us to the minute and imperceptible causes abovementioned; or else obtruding upon us that idle unmeaning word "chance" instead of a physical cause, which is saying nothing at all. How hard must men be pressed under an hypothesis, when they fly to such evasive shifts as these! How much easier and better would it be to give up all such unknown and unaccountable impulses, and own that both common sense and experience dictate an independent, free, self-moving principle, the true, the obvious, the only source of action?" page 165. edition 1st.

Objection

*Objection IV.* But whatsoever may be said of the blind and arbitrary determinations of the will of man, without reason and without motive, surely it is not so with the great and blessed God; all his actions are wise, and fit, and good: His will always chuses and determines according to the fitness or unfitness of things: He never does any thing in an arbitrary manner, or by mere will and pleasure; and though we are at a loss to find out the superior fitness or unfitness of many things by which the divine will is determined to chuse or refuse, yet he who hath all the infinite ideas of things real and possible within the grasp of his understanding, can see those superior fitnesses or unfitnesses which are unsearchable to us, and he always determines and acts according to them: for infinite wisdom cannot act otherwise.

*Answer.* To guard against the charge of supposing the great God to act in an arbitrary manner, without good reason, and without fit motives, let it be again considered, what has been often hinted before, that God never decrees or acts in general without a just design and reason for it, and a proper end to be obtained by it: as for instance; if God determine to create rather than not to create, there was probably a reason for it taken from the consequences of creation which the blessed God designed, and had in his view: But when several distinct and different creatures or worlds appear in idea to his infinite understanding, in any of which there is no superior fitness, but which in themselves are equally fit, and by each of which, considered as means, he may equally obtain the same end, then he must chuse one of these means, that is, one of these worlds in particular, only by the determination of his own will: And if this be called sovereign and arbitrary conduct, it is still no more than the eternal nature of things requires, and it shews him to be a proper sovereign over all his creatures, and to have a complete freedom of indifference or absolute choice in these his determinations.

*Objection V.* Perhaps it will be objected here, that if two things are perfectly equal, and if the will of God or man determines itself to chuse one of them without a sufficient reason taken from the things, to determine it, then it is determined by mere chance or accident: Now it is very hard to suppose concerning any wise being, and especially concerning the all-wise God, that in any instance of action he is determined by chance.

*Answer.* Chance is a word invented to signify the production of an effect in the corporeal world, whose cause we see not, and for which we cannot account; then we say, it came by chance, as though there was no cause of it. Chances or accidents are such events as we see not the train of causes which produce them. But in the acts of the will there is nothing can be ascribed to chance, for the will itself is the obvious cause of it's own determinations.

The word chance always means something done without design. Chance and design stand in direct opposition to each other; and consequently chance can never be properly applied to acts of the will, which is the spring of all design, and which designs to chuse whatsoever it doth chuse, whether there be any superior fitness in the thing it chuses or no; and it designs to determine itself to one thing where two things perfectly equal are proposed, merely because it will.

Nor can I think of any way to refute this doctrine which I have here proposed, unless we could prove that amongst all the infinite mediums which may appear to the human or the divine mind towards the attainment of any proposed end, there are no two mediums that are equal, or which cannot be equally accommodated to their own purposes: And I think this is more than any man can prove. But this introduces the last objection.



Objection VI. If we may judge of things by the nicest observations that we can possibly make among all the beings we know or converse with, there is no such thing in nature, nor ever was, as two things proposed to the will of God or man which are perfectly equal or indifferent, or wherein every circumstance was so entirely alike, that there is no reason for the will to incline to one side rather than the other. There is no such thing as two leaves of a tree exactly alike; you may travel and search till your feet and your eyes ake, and never find them. Even in two grains of sand, or two drops of milk or water, microscopes will always shew you some difference; and therefore this doctrine of two or more things perfectly equal is founded upon a mere imaginary supposition, and the hypothesis that is built upon it cannot stand.

Answer. What if there are no two leaves of trees, no two grains of sand, or drops of water or milk perfectly alike; because they are all compounded bodies? Yet in two bodies perfectly simple, such as two pieces of solid matter without a pore, there may be perfect equality and likeness. And surely if not in fact, yet in the divine idea of possibles there may be many parts of matter perfectly like and equal. If we are allowed to talk of two distinct parts of time, or distinct parts of space in which the world might have been created, it must be confessed that these parts of space or time are perfectly alike, and consequently that the determination of the will of God to create the world in one of these parts of time or space rather than another, was entirely from his own will.

If one would descend to the minute specific particles of which distinct bodies are composed, we should see abundant reason to believe there are thousands of such little particles or atoms of matter, which are perfectly equal and alike, and could give no distinct determination to the will of God where to place them. Is it not acknowledged by philosophers that the different kinds of bodies are made up of corpuscles, of different shapes and different sizes; but that each particular kind is made of similar corpuscles, and nearly equal also? Thus for instance, the particles of common water have some essential difference from the particles of oil, blood, quicksilver, animal or vegetable juices, and other liquids; but they are, in a great measure, if not universally, similar among themselves: Now if we consider the immense quantity of pure water which is in this world, and the innumerable small essential particles that compose it, is there not abundant reason to suppose that millions of these particles are equal and alike, rather than to imagine that God the Creator took special care that among the innumerable millions of these aqueous particles which he made in all the rivers and oceans in the world, there should not be two of them alike and equal; and yet that all of them should be so nearly equal, and so much alike, as to distinguish them from the particles of all other bodies?

We might use the same sort of reasoning concerning the particles that compose air, light, sun-beams, concerning earth, sand, stone and chalk, concerning grass, herbs, leaves and trees; the hair, skin, flesh and bones of animals, and all other specific particles of bodies whether solid or fluid, that compose this lower world: We might ascend to the sun, the vastest of all bodies, and consider the infinite myriads of luminous or fiery particles which go to compose it, or which have been issuing from it every moment since its creation, and all these perhaps are vastly more in number than go to compose all the planets put together, and then enquire whether there are not two of all these particles exactly alike: This argument would run through the whole universe of the planetary worlds, with all their contents and inhabitants; and can we suppose that the Creator took such exact care as never to make two particles of any body perfectly equal and similar, and at the same time that he

took

took care to make each of them so nearly equal and similar, as to keep all the particles of one species of bodies in shape and size sufficiently distinct from the particles that compose every other species? He that can suppose this, plainly appears to serve an hypothesis.

It is evident enough that the objector's supposition, that there are no two things equal and alike, is only brought in to oppose this doctrine which I have laid down, and that without any proof, or indeed probability: And the supposition that there are or may be a multitude of things which are entirely alike and equal, is certainly a possible thing, and vastly the more probable of the two. If we had no proof of it, yet the various difficulties or seeming absurdities that press hard upon the contrary supposition, viz. "that no two things are equal, and that the will of God or man is always determined by some superior fitness of things," would incline one to renounce that hypothesis. These will be represented at large in the next section.

Since the first edition of this book an ingenious friend has proposed this objection, viz. If God exerts his creating power, he hath some reason for it taken from the preferableness of the existence of what he creates to it's non-existence; otherwise he would never create at all. To this I answer,

Answer. This is more than can be proved, for the non-existence of that creature may be as fit in itself as the existence of it; and God might have created another being equally fit in the room of it, by the mere determination of his own will.

My friend goes on, If of two possible objects equally fit to be chosen, he gives existence to one, leaving the other in it's non-existent state, the reason of his creating but one is the absence of any good reason for creating of both.

Answer. It is possible there might be equal reason for the creation of one or of both, that is, no reason at all in superior fitness: but the existence of one rather than both may be entirely owing to the will of God.

Or suppose God was determined by superior fitness to create one out of two possibles rather than both, yet the existence or the non existence of either of them alone, may have equal fitness, though the existence of both should be supposed unfit. But how ready are we to lose and confound our thoughts in this abstract reasoning upon divine ideas and decrees, which are indeed too high and too hard for us; and it becomes us not to be too positive and presumptuous upon either side of such sublime and abstruse reasonings.

## SECTION VII.

### *The difficulties that attend the contrary scheme.*

**W**HEN we enter into a narrow disquisition of the eternal counsels of God, and the determinations of his will, perhaps we shall find some difficulties pressing us on all sides, which cannot be clearly and completely relieved by the understanding and reasoning powers of man, at least in this present state. I do not pretend that my set of sentiments is entirely free from all: But the chief difficulty is to find any scheme which has less or fewer than this which I have represented. Till I see that done, I think I must be content to abide where I am. It is possible I may meet with some new objections against mine, which I had not thought of before; but while every scheme has some hardships, I persuade myself that hypothesis may still be allowed to come nearest to the truth, which has the least and fewest difficulties attending it. But when the difficulties are many more and greater which hang upon any one human scheme than do upon another, we are naturally led to suppose



that such a scheme can never be true, or at least that it is by no means so probable as the opposite.

Let us then consider what will be the consequences of supposing that the divine will in all it's determinations and decrees whatsoever, is universally, certainly and unalterably influenced by the superior fitness of things.

Difficulty I. Then there is nothing amongst all the works of God's creation, or his providence, or his government of creatures through time or eternity, left free to him with a liberty of choice or indifference, since this opinion supposes there is but one single train of fittest things, or one set of things supremely fit among all the millions of supposed possibles that come within the divine survey. Has it not been always said, and that with great truth and justice, that all creatures are contingent beings, and that they might not have been. But according to this supposition, no creature existing is a contingent being, for it's superior fitness made it's existence necessary.

And upon this hypothesis every atom in the creation, together with the shape of it, and the size and situation of it through the whole universe, every motion in the world of corporeal nature appointed by God, together with the times and periods, minutes and moments of every event, the least as well as the greatest, except those which are introduced by inferior spirits, are all eternally necessary, because they are the fittest that could be.

And I might add, they are as unchangeably necessary as the being of God himself, that is, with a consequential, if not with a simultaneous necessity; for at least from the very position of his essence and existence, all conceivable things, with all their infinite relations and their eternal fitnesses arise, and they all appear to his view: And the only one scheme of things which is most fit, is necessarily determined by him into existence and actual futurity, with all the minutest parts and appendices thereof, because he sees the superior fitness of them all: Thus the least appearance and event in the corporeal world throughout all the ages of creation and providence, is unalterably necessary, if not equally necessary with God's own being.

Let us see now how such a proposition would sound, and with what aspect such a scheme of things would appear to our minds, if we enter into the detail of them. Then God could not have abstained from making this our world at all, nor from making it just such as it is, nor withheld his hand from creation one moment longer: then he could not have made one more planet or star, or one less than he has done: nay, not so much as one atom or dust more or less in any star or planet, nor have placed them in any other form. He could not have given the sun one more beam, nor any morning since the creation one more gleam of light, or one less shade of darkness. Then the ever-blessed God could not have been happy one moment longer in solitude, or without creatures, nor begun to form any part of this universe, or this globe earlier or later than he did; nor could he have caused one spire of grass to grow on this earth, nor one drop of water in the sea, nor one sand more or less at the bottom of it. He could not continue the material world, nor any atom of it a moment longer in existence, nor have fixed the periods even of the minutest beings any otherwise than he has done. Not a drop of rain could fall, not a particle of water flow, nor a dusky atom of smoke ascend in any other manner, nor at any other minute than it doth; nor could the great God have decreed it otherwise in the least punctilio, so far as mere corporeal nature is concerned therein, because each of these was supremely fit, together with the original train of causes which necessarily produced them.

But

But if it be allowed, that in any of these minute and inconsiderable things, God may determine freely and merely by his own will without superior fitness, why may he not determine ten thousand other things, which seem to us of greater importance, merely by his own will without superior fitness?

But on the contrary, if God cannot do any thing without the view of superior fitness, this difficulty will extend to the affairs of human nature also, and to the works of providence, redemption and grace, as well as to the inanimate world and God's creating influences. The *Americans* and the *Hottentots* could not have been formed otherwise than under such special disadvantages; nor could *Great-Britain* have had the gospel withheld from it one moment longer. Nor indeed, according to this scheme, could God have withheld his Son from being sent to redeem the world, nor withheld his Spirit with all it's gifts and influences from the inhabitants of this globe, nor have omitted any one miracle towards the propagation of this gospel; for the will of God was absolutely determined to do all this by it's superior fitness.

What strange doctrine is this, contrary to all our ideas of the dominion of God? Does it not destroy the glory of his liberty of choice, and take away from the Creator and governor and benefactor of the world, that most free and sovereign agent, all the glory of this sort of freedom? Does it not seem to make him a kind of intelligent instrument of eternal necessity, an almost mechanical medium of fate, and introduce Mr. *Hobbes's* doctrine of fatality and necessity into all things that God hath to do with? Doth it not seem to represent God as a being of vast understanding and consciousness, as well as of power and efficiency, but still to leave him without a will to chuse among all the objects within his view? In short, it seems to make the blessed God a sort of almighty minister of fate under it's universal and supreme influence. Thus speaks the heathen stoic in a tragedy:

"Quæ nexa suis currunt causis  
Non licet ipsum vertisse *Jovem*." *Seneca*.

"Thus causes run, a long connected train;  
Not *Jove* himself can break th' eternal chain."

And it was the professed sentiment of some of the ancients, that "fate was above the gods."

Is it not abundantly better to suppose that among the infinite variety of possibles in the survey of the great God, there might be many schemes of grand design, and many mediums of accomplishment, both in the larger and minuter parts of them, which might be equally fit and proper? And that God by his own will determined which scheme he would chuse, and which medium he would make use of to bring it to pass? And that he made or rendered this particular scheme and these mediums become, if I may so express it, more fit and good, that is, pleasing and agreeable by his own chusing them? So a man, when he has once chosen for himself one thing out of many which he proposed to himself, and all which before appeared to him to be equally good, makes that which he has chosen particularly more agreeable and good to himself by his choice of it, and for ever after prefers it because his own will has actually chosen it: He delights in his own free choice.

Objection. Perhaps it may be replied here, that even according to the scheme that I have proposed, all those things are allowed to be eternally and unchangeably necessary in which God beholds a superior fitness; and these perhaps are far more



in number than those which have no such superior fitness, or which in themselves are equal and indifferent: And then it will follow that even in this scheme of mine, fatality is introduced into far the greatest parts of the works of God.\* For if there be the least degree of inequality in any two or more objects, the divine wisdom beholds it, and finds out the superior fitness, and is determined thereby: And then probably there are but few things left which have such a perfect equality in them, as to be the objects of free choice: All the rest is mere fate.

Answer. But to this I answer, That if we suppose no more than two different sorts of worlds to have had equal fitness in the divine view, before he chose to create one of them, together with the creatures and the inhabitants in them, then it follows that every creature and every circumstance of every creature in this one universe or world, which God has actually chosen and created, were all matters of indifference, and consequently were the object of his free choice: For though every creature in this universe, or the world which is now made, should be allowed to have a superior fitness with regard to the place it holds in this present universe, which is very improbable, and more than can be proved, yet I think we must own that every individual part or creature of this world, together with this world itself, once stood in the view of God as a matter of mere indifference, and an object of free choice, since another sort of world might have been created, with all its different parts, creatures or inhabitants.

We might proceed further, and say the same concerning every single planet, and the creatures or inhabitants in it, and perhaps concerning every large spot of land, every mountain, every island, every sea and river in any of these planets, that they might have been altered as to some atoms or drops that compose them, though the other parts of that planetary world had been the same: And this reasonable supposition provides objects enough for the divine choice, and the freedom of the will of God to exert itself.

We might also descend to much minuter parts of the creation, to every tree, and leaf, and flower, to every plant and animal, to every feather and hair of fowl and beast, as well as to the inanimate parts of any of these globes: There does not seem to be an absolute necessity that every minute part, and pore and fibre of every species and of every individual should be precisely what they now are, even though the chief part of the form of each of them were the same as it is: And this will still provide new objects for the choice of God, and his perfect liberty. Thus his actions of free choice in our world will be vastly more numerous than those to which he is any way determined by a superior fitness.

Nay, every act of God and his determination of any or every circumstance relating to every creature in the present universe, will be an act of his free choice or liberty of indifference, if we allow, as I said before, but two general schemes of a creable

\* Another objection is raised here: If there be any one thing to which God is influenced by superior fitness, this is fatality: and if such a fatality be allowed in one thing why may it not in all? Or if one or a few such instances in God's works do not infer fatality, why should many or all infer it?

Answer I. As we do not charge the doctrine of fatality on men upon a supposition of some of the volitions or actions of men to be determined necessarily, since the rest and greatest part are free, so neither can fatality be charged on God, since the chief and largest part of his actions "ad extra" are free also, as will appear further in what follows.

Answer II. Whatsoever ideas or propositions, whatsoever eternal truths, or rules of virtue may be necessary in the divine mind, yet there is not so much as the real existence of one creature necessary, and so fatality is utterly excluded; since all created beings are contingent till the will of God determine them into existence. See difficulty I. preceding. See also the answer to the objection in this very page.

creable universe to have been equally fit; even though every particular part of each universe were supposed to be necessary to it's own whole, and therefore supremely fit in that particular universe, if language will allow such an expression. This doctrine therefore is so far from fatality in every part of it, that it makes every creature or existent being in the present natural world the object of God's free choice.

Difficulty II. According to this supposed scheme, that is, if one single thing be the only fittest, and if God be determined necessarily to this one thing, then the free grace and goodness of God, and the special thankfulness of man for his benefits, seem to be much diminished, and in some measure precluded: For in this view of things, God could not bestow one grain of favour more or less upon any creature than he hath done; nor could he have chosen any other object for the exercise of his mercy and goodness, either among the varieties of the animal or intellectual creatures than what he has chosen. And would not this take away a great part of my obligation to thankfulness for any of his benefits, and in some measure cancel my obligations to thank him for his choice of me to be the object of them, if I must believe that God could not have withheld these benefits from me, nor could have chosen any other object for those blessings which he has made me partaker of, nor given me a grain less of any good thing which I enjoy relating to this life or another?

It is true, you will say, God has done me as much good as he could do, and therefore I am under the highest obligations to him: But let it be remembered also, if I may dare to express the consequence of this opinion, that he has made me as unhappy as he could make me, according to this scheme, and see whether this does not diminish or vacate a great part of this obligation.

Will not this destroy, or at least vastly abate the reasons of gratitude and love to God in those who receive his favours, when kings and slaves, rich men and beggars, strong men and cripples, creatures whose life is filled with pain and poverty, or whose whole period of life is affluence and ease, were distinguished only and necessarily by the superior fitness of their circumstances? What is there of free mercy in his disposal of benefits? What can we find of mercy in the decree or providence of God, which distinguishes the happy from the miserable? What is it that raises them above the others, but that God was necessarily determined to divide these distinct portions to them all by the superior fitness of things? And have not *Abraham* the friend of God, *David* the king, *Paul* the apostle, *Sir Isaac Newton* the philosopher, *Judas* the traitor, *Irus* the cripple, *Davus* the slave, and *Jack Adams* the idiot, all equal reason of thankfulness to the free bounty of their maker, since so far as he acted in their composition of mind or body, or in their original circumstances of life, he determined each in such a particular manner, because his own will was thus necessarily determined, and therefore he could not have done otherwise.

Difficulty III. If there be but one such superior fitness among all the ends and means which are in the comprehensive survey of God, and if God be under an unalterable necessity of determining according to this superior fitness, thence it will follow that every thing possible is necessary, and every thing that is not necessary is impossible.

There is scarce any real difference between things necessary and things possible, even in the view of God himself, according to this scheme of all things being determined by supreme fitness. The difference is chiefly in our apprehension, by reason of our short-sighted views of things, who cannot discover this superior fitness. But in reality, and in the sight of God, according to this hypothesis, nothing is possible to be done by God himself but what hath this superior fitness, and that is always necessary, and must be done.

And



And according to this opinion also, what is not necessary is really impossible, and can never come into existence, because it has not this superior fitness. In this way of thinking, there neither is, nor ever was a medium between the necessity of what is future, and the impossibility of that which is not future, since there is but one fittest means or end, and that is necessarily future; but what is not fittest is for ever impossible, and always was so. Now does not this appear strange and incredible doctrine?

I know it will be objected here, that this way of talking confounds metaphysical necessity with moral necessity, which are very distinct things. A metaphysical necessity, say some, is a necessity arising from the essence or nature of things, and takes place only where the opposite implies a contradiction; so all the semidiameters of a circle are necessarily equal, because it is inconsistent in the nature of things they should be unequal. But a moral necessity is that whereby a most wise being is necessarily led to chuse that which is best, or to act that which is fittest. Now in this view there is a wide difference, say they, betwixt things necessary and possible, that is, things that are metaphysically possible and which are morally necessary. A thing is said to be metaphysically possible wherein there is no inconsistency in the nature of things, and such are ten thousand essences which yet shall never exist: And this is very different from a thing which is morally necessary, that is, which an all wise being wills and chuses out of ten thousand supposed possibles, because of it's superior fitness, even though divine wisdom cannot chuse otherwise. But to this I answer,

Answer. That in philosophical strictness and the truth of things, this moral necessity and impossibility, and this metaphysical necessity and impossibility will appear to be very near a-kin: And though there may be some difference between these two necessities, viz. moral and metaphysical, as to the immediate and proxime cause and reason of their necessity, yet the necessity of both of them is a physical or natural necessity, they are both equally strong and unalterable, and the original cause and reason why both of them are necessary, lies in the very nature of things. I might say the same also concerning their impossibility: As for example; if the being A cannot possibly exist because it carries in it some ideas or properties which are naturally inconsistent, so neither can B possibly exist, because it doth not carry in it a superior fitness; since, according to this hypothesis, it is inconsistent with the nature of the all-wise God to make B exist, because it was not supremely fit; and it is inconsistent in the nature of things that B should ever come into existence, because it wanted one property necessary to the possibility of it's existing, and that is supreme fitness: Thus from the very nature of God, and from the nature of things, it is impossible that B should ever exist. And how much does this differ from a natural or physical impossibility?

Hence it appears, according to this hypothesis, that it was true from eternity that every thing was naturally impossible which had not in it's nature this superior fitness; and if it had in it's nature this superior fitness, then it was not only possible, but had a sort of natural necessity to exist, which was the thing I undertook to prove, and which is the difficulty under which this opinion still seems to labour, notwithstanding the offered distinction.

Difficulty IV. Another difficulty that seems to bear hard upon this hypothesis, of "all things being determined by superior fitness," is this, viz. Then there would be scarce any real difference between the moral and the positive laws of God. The one would be every whit as necessary as the other, both in themselves as laws, and with regard to God the law-giver: For if all the positive commands and institutions of God are given because he saw an antecedent fitness and goodness in them superior to any other commands that could be given at that time, and in those circumstances; and

and if all his moral commands are given upon the same reason, will it not follow that the positive laws are as necessary for that time and those circumstances as the moral laws are in all times and circumstances? I say, allowing this difference, that the moral commands are necessary at all times and occasions, and the positive only on some particular occasions. And upon this hypothesis, it is no more in the power of God to have altered the positive commands on those particular occasions, than it is in his power to change the moral commands on any occasion whatsoever. Then every pin and tack in the tabernacle of *Moses*, every little punctilio and circumstance in all the *levitical* rites of purification and sacrifice, every colour and thread which is of divine appointment in the curtains of the tabernacle, or the vestments of the priest, were as necessary at that time and place as the ten commands, or any rule of virtue and piety whatsoever; since they did necessitate and determine the will of God to appoint them by his seeing a superior fitness and goodness in them all.

It is true indeed, we who are short-sighted creatures, and cannot penetrate so far into the fitness or unfitness of things cannot find out the positive commands of God by our reasoning, as we can many of the greater and more obvious moral laws: yet let it be observed also, that these moral laws in some of the lesser branches of them, and in their application to particular cases, perhaps can hardly be found out by our short and feeble reasonings; and in this respect the difference between moral and positive laws would grow less and less, even with regard to us, till in many instances the difference would vanish. But with regard to God himself, and in the nature of things, they would be both equally necessary, and God could not appoint any of them otherwise than he has done.

Difficulty V. Then there would be no such thing as any liberty of choice and indifference in the world, or at least only among imperfect intelligent beings who are endowed with wills, and that but seldom too: And this very liberty would arise merely from their imperfection, that is, because in some things they could not find the superior fitness, since they cannot extend their knowledge deep and wide enough to see all the fitnesses and unfitnesses of things. For according to this scheme, all the decrees and actions of God the most perfect spirit, about himself, or about his creatures, would be ever necessary; and all the material creation, the whole universe of bodies, and every natural motion therein, so far as ordained by God even in their remotest causes, would be necessary from the beginning to the end of all things: And a very wise man who sees the fitnesses of things, would have scarce any thing of this freedom, for he would be always necessarily determined in his choice by this superior fitness.

But let us think a little further on this point: If this opinion were true in the whole scheme, and all spirits, perfect or imperfect, were necessarily determined to act according as things appeared fit or unfit to the mind, and if these appearances were the necessary result of the situation of man or other intelligent creatures, whether wise or unwise, among a variety of objects; then, I think, there would be no freedom of choice, no liberty of indifference at all, no proper self-determining power, either in heaven or earth, either in God, angels or men, but all would be one huge scheme of fatality both in the intellectual and material world.

Shall it be replied here, what? Is there no liberty of indifference to be found any where but where the objects are entirely equal? Have I not liberty of choice, when I chuse one house to dwell in, or prefer one piece of cloth to wear rather than another, because I find one better and fitter for my use than another? Does not all the



world call this a liberty of choice, and proper freedom of the will, notwithstanding the superior qualifications or motives that inclined me to chuse this and refuse that?

I answer, and allow this to be a proper freedom or liberty of choice, supposing the will only to be directed and inclined by these motives, and not powerfully and necessarily determined by them. But if once we assert the will to be necessarily determined by these motives, then it has no proper self-determining power in these instances, and the very idea of proper liberty vanishes and is lost. And indeed what great difference will there be between matter and spirit, if both are determined to move or act only by external influences? Both would be unactive or incapable of self-activity; but one would have a consciousness of it's actions which the other has not.

Is it not much better therefore to suppose, that the influence of motives in the understanding reaches no further than to direct the will, without a certain or necessary determination of it, wheresoever there are motives arising from superior fitness? And may we not reasonably conceive both in this universe, as well as in the world of possibles, that there are millions of objects wherein this superior fitness either is not, or does not appear; and here is still a larger space for the exercise of perfect freedom of choice, and wherein the will is determined by nothing but itself.

Difficulty VI. It may be considered as another difficulty and hardship which would attend this opinion, that there are a great number of scriptures which would have a most absurd sound, if they were to be interpreted upon this foot, viz. the necessary determination of the will of God in every thing by the antecedent and superior fitness of things. There is no act of providence or grace which the scripture represents as a free favour of the blessed God, but would be hereby made necessary, and God would be limited to that one object and that one action. Let us consider a few particulars.

*Numb. iv. 37.* *Moses* saith to the *Israelites*, "Because he loved thy fathers, *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, therefore he chose their seed after them:" But in truth, according to this doctrine, he loved them because they were the fittest for his love, and God could not do otherwise; and he chose them and their seed, because he could make no other choice.

*Deuter. xxi. 5.* "The priests the sons of *Levi*, the Lord thy God hath chosen to minister unto him;" that is, because he saw such a superior fitness in the sons of *Levi*, that he could not chuse any other tribe.

*1 Sam. x. 24.* God chose *Saul* to make him a king, but he was determined to it by the superior fitness of this choice.

*Psal. cxxxii. 13.* "The Lord hath chosen *Sion*, he hath desired it for his habitation;" that is, because he saw it so fit, that he could not chuse any other dwelling in that age.

*1 Corinth. i. 27.* "God hath chosen the foolish things of this world, and the weak things, and things that are despised." It is true, he gives a reason for it, viz. that he might confound the wise, &c. but then it is plain, he could not have chosen the wise, the mighty and the honourable.

*1 Thess. ii. 13.* "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation;" that is, because it was so supremely fit, that he could not pass you by without chusing you.

How frequent is the expression in scripture of God's chusing this or that person or thing, this or that family or nation, for particular purposes in his providence and grace? And it is represented still as a matter of free favour: But according to this interpretation,

interpretation, there is no true liberty of choice or free mercy in all these things, since there was such a superior fitness on that side, that it was not possible for God to have determined or chose otherwise.

But let us proceed to some other texts. *Eph. ii. 4.* "God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,—hath quickened us together with *Christ*:" But according to this opinion, he could not possibly have loved the *Ephesians* less than he did, nor let them go on in their death of trespasses and sins without quickening grace.

*1 Tim. i. 13.* "I was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, saith *St. Paul*, but I obtained mercy— and the grace of God, was exceeding abundant. But this opinion would interpret the words, that God could not withhold mercy from me, and therefore I obtained it: and the grace of God was exceeding abundant to me, because it was not possible it should have been less.

*Romans ix. 23, 24.* "That he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy—not of the *jews* only, but also of the gentiles:" But this opinion obscures these riches of glorious grace, by shewing that God could chuse no other vessels of mercy but the *jews* of old time, and the gentiles afterward, and in that proportion in which he chose them.

*Romans x. 20.* "*Isaiah* grows very bold and saith, I was found of them that sought me not;" that is, God was necessarily determined by the superior and antecedent fitness of things to be found of those who never sought him.

And if we read the whole ninth chapter to the *Romans*, we find God is there represented as making a distinction of mercy between *Isaac* and *Ishmael*, between *Jacob* and *Esau*, between the *jews* and gentiles, first in favour of the *jews*, and afterwards rejecting the *jews*, and receiving the gentiles: Let these texts be construed in what sense you please with regard to persons, or families, or nations, or with regard to temporal, spiritual, or eternal blessings, still all are represented by the apostle as instances of God's sovereign goodness and special mercy, in the free choice of some, and the neglecting of others. But according to this opinion, there is no such thing as liberty of choice or indifference with God in any of these actions; for he could have acted no otherwise than he did in any one punctilio of grace or providence: His will was necessarily determined as to all his benefits of every kind, and to the persons who were objects of them, by antecedent superior fitness, so that he could not have bestowed nor withheld these blessings in any other manner than he has withheld or bestowed them.

I grant always, and have always granted, that wheresoever there is such an antecedent superior fitness of things, God acts according to it, so as never to contradict it; and particularly in all his judicial proceedings as a governor and distributor of rewards and punishments, he has a constant regard to vice and virtue, to superior fitness and unfitness, though he may reward or rather bestow beyond our merit, or he may punish less. And even in acts of mere bounty and free goodness, we must always grant and suppose him never to act what is not fit. Yet we may also suppose, when we consider God as a benefactor, that in his infinite survey of things, there may be a thousand equally fit objects for this goodness, and a thousand equal ways of manifesting it. Now this reasonable supposition leaves him a very large field for the exercise of his sovereign goodness and pleasure, and the free determinations of his will and choice, both as to the blessings which he bestows, and the persons or nations on whom he bestows them.

Let us take one further step, and shew that even the grace of God in sending his own Son to redeem us, is much obscured by this opinion of the constant determina-



tion of the will of God by some superior fitness. *John* iii. 16. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life;" that is, according to this opinion, God so greatly loved the world of mankind because he saw it antecedently most fit for his love, and therefore could not love it less; and he gave his only begotten Son, because he saw it so supremely fit, that he could not withhold him; and he made this covenant of grace and proposal of salvation, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish," because this proposal was so supremely fit also, that it was not possible for him to make any other covenant or any other proposal of salvation.

Verse 17. "God sent not his Son to condemn the world," that is, because he saw it unfit that he should do so, and therefore he could not have sent his Son on this dreadful errand.

*Romans* v. 8. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were—sinners *Christ* died for us;" but according to this doctrine he was so necessarily determined to give this particular instance of love to sinners, and to save them in this manner, that he could not have refused to give his Son to die for them. What contrary turns would this sort of philosophy give to this most divine instance of free and rich mercy in all the bible?

Give me leave at the end of this catalogue of scriptures, to cite two or three which represent to us in a more express manner, that the will of God often determines itself with such a supposition of superior fitnesses, that he may display his own godhead, and the independence of his actions. *Rom.* ix. 15. cited from *Exod.* xxxiii. 19. "I will make all my goodness to pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee: and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy." Now, as the name of the Lord is "I am what I am, or I will be what I will be," *Exod.* iii. 14. so his correspondent character in matters of pure grace and bounty is, "I will do what I will do;" that is, the will of God in matters of mere bounty is a self-governing principle, and is determined only by itself in his most free and sovereign instances of grace and blessing; he hath no other determination but what arises from within himself, even the good-pleasure of his own will.

How often is this thought repeated in the word of God? How frequently is this given as the only reason of his conduct, in his works of creation, and in his distributions of blessings in the kingdom of providence and the kingdom of grace? *Matth.* xi. 26. "Even so, Father, because it pleased thee." *Rev.* iv. 11. "Thou hast created all things, O Lord, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." *Isa.* xli. 9, 10. "I am God, and none else—I will do all my pleasure." *Matth.* xx. 14, 15. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? I will give to this last even as unto thee." *Rom.* ix. 18. "He hath mercy on whom he will."—The blessed God, considered as a Creator and as a benefactor, worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will; in a thousand instances his own will is his counsellor: He acts "according to the good-pleasure of his will which he hath purposed within himself." *Eph.* i. 5, 9, 11.

And here let me conclude with the words of St. Paul, *Rom.* xi. 33, 36. who, when he had been tracing out the methods of the conduct of God towards the *jews* and gentiles, leaves the springs and reasons of them all entirely within himself, and adores the great incomprehensible; "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! Of him, and by him, and for him are all things; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

T H E

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**CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE**  
**OF THE**  
**T R I N I T Y:**

**O R,**

**FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, three PERSONS**  
**and one G O D,**

**Afferted and proved,**

**With their divine RIGHTS and HONORS**

**Vindicated,**

**By plain evidence of scripture, without the aid or incumbrance of**  
**human S C H E M E S.**

**Written chiefly for the use of private CHRISTIANS.**



THE  
CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE  
OF THE  
TRINITY:

OR,  
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Validated,

By plain evidence of scripture, without the aid of tradition:  
JAMES SCHENCK

Written chiefly for the use of private Christians

# T H E P R E F A C E.

**T**HE late controversies about the important doctrine of the trinity, have engaged multitudes of christians in a fresh study of that subject; and amongst the rest I thought it my duty to review my opinions and my faith.

In my younger years, when I endeavoured to form my judgment on that article, the *socinians* were the chief or only popular opponents. Upon a honest search of the scripture, and a comparison of their notions with it, I wondered how it was possible for any person to believe the bible to be the word of God, and yet to believe that *Jesus Christ* was a mere man. So perverse and preposterous did their sense of the scripture appear, that I was amazed how men, who pretended to reason above their neighbours, could wrench and strain their understandings, and subdue their assent to such interpretations. And I am of the same mind still.

But while I was then establishing my sentiments of the deity of the Son and Spirit by the plain expressions of scripture, and the assistance of learned writers, I was led easily into the scholastic forms of explication; this being the current language of several centuries. And thus unawares I mingled those opinions of the schools, with the more plain and scriptural doctrine, and thought them all necessary to my faith, as thousands had done before me.

When I lately resumed this study, I found that the refiners of the *arian* heresy had introduced a much more plausible scheme than that of *Socinus*. While I read some of these writers, I was so much divested of prejudice, and so sincerely willing to find any new light, which might render this sublime doctrine more intelligible, that some persons would have charged me with lukewarmness and indifference. But I think my heart was upright in these enquiries. And as the result of my search, I must say, that I am a steadfast and sincere believer of the godhead of *Christ* still. For though these authors give a rational and successful turn to some places of scripture, which I thought once did contain a substantial argument for that truth, yet there was never any thing that I could find in these new writings, that gave me a satisfying answer to that old, that general and extensive argument for the deity of the Son and Spirit, which I have proposed in it's clearest light in the eighth proposition. The expressions of scripture on that head were so numerous, so evident, so firm and strong, that I could not with any justice and reason enter into the sentiments of this new scheme. But after a due survey of it, I was fully convinced, that the professors of it, who denied the Son and Spirit to have true and eternal godhead belonging to them, were so far departed from the christian faith.

I render



I render hearty thanks to God, who hath so guarded the freedom of my thoughts, as to keep them religiously submissive to plain revelation; and has made these later enquiries a means to establish my faith in this blessed article; That the Father, Son and Spirit, are three \* persons and one God, and to confirm it by juster and brighter evidences, than I was possessed of before.

But while I was engaged in this study, I found that the scholastic explication of this sacred doctrine was not in all the parts of it so evidently revealed, and so firmly grounded upon scripture as the plain doctrine itself. Thus while my faith grew bolder in this sacred article, my assurance as to the modes of explication sensibly abated. Though none of the *arian* arguments could prevail against my belief of the true and eternal godhead subsisting in three persons, yet my thoughts were often embarrassed about the co-eternal and co-equal sonship of *Christ*, and procession of the holy Spirit, about the communication of the same infinite individual essence, or the conveyance of the same unoriginated and self-existent nature to two other distinct persons in the godhead. I began to think that we had been too bold in our determinations of the "modus" of this mystery; we had entered too far, and been too positive in describing the eternal and consubstantial generation of the Son, and spiration of the holy Ghost in the same numerical essence; and that we had made a particular detail of these incomprehensibles too necessary a part of our creed.

And especially when I came to reflect, that there had been some other modes of explaining this sacred article proposed to the world, and some of them patronized by men of distinguished learning and unblemished piety, I found that these learned scholastic forms and terms of explication were by no means necessary to support the scriptural doctrine: I took notice also how much occasion the unskilful management of these artificial hypotheses had given to the cavils of heretical wits, to blaspheme the doctrine itself.

I then considered with myself, how useful it might be to private christians to have the plain naked doctrine of scripture concerning the trinity fairly drawn out, and set before their eyes with all its divine vouchers: How much more easily they would embrace this article when they see the whole of it so expressly revealed: And though they might confess they knew not the way to explain it, yet perhaps they might be more firmly established in the truth, and better guarded against temptations to heresy, than if it were surrounded and incorporated with hard words and learned explications, which could not be proved with such express evidence from the word of God, which are confessed to be as unconceivable as the doctrine itself, and which had often ministered to strife and controversy.

I imagined also, that it would be an acceptable service to the church of *Christ*, if this sublime and important doctrine were brought down to a practical use, and our particular duties to the sacred three, were distinctly declared and vindicated out of the holy scriptures; which is of far greater moment to our piety and salvation than any nice adjustment of all the mysterious circumstances that relate to this article in the theory of it.

I knew of no treatise on this subject written in this manner, and therefore I attempted it. Now the reader will find these four things following designed and kept in view throughout this discourse, viz.

First,

\* Let it be ever remembered, that both in the title, the preface, and throughout the whole treatise, I take the word "person" to signify no more than a sufficient distinction between the sacred three, to sustain the distinct characters and offices assigned to them in scripture.

I. To declare and confirm this blessed doctrine of the trinity, by plain and express testimonies of scripture. As far as I was capable, I would make this truth appear to the world with as much evidence as it has appeared to me, that the same true godhead belongs to Father, Son and Spirit, and yet that they are three such distinct agents or principles of action, as may reasonably be called persons.

II. To describe, according to the revelation of scripture, what are the same divine honors and duties that may be paid to the sacred three, considered as one in godhead; and what are the distinct personal duties and honors that we are required to pay to each divine person, considered in their distinct characters and offices.

III. To shew that all the necessary truths that relate to this doctrine may be believed, and all the necessary duties that flow from it may be performed, without enquiring into any particular schemes to explain this great mystery of godliness, or to determine the manner, "how one God subsists in three persons." To this end I have taken care to avoid every argument, and every expression that would confine our thoughts to any one scheme of explication, or necessarily lead us into any one hypothesis. For since the doctrine of the trinity is so important in itself, and so necessary to true christianity, I would not willingly bring in any thing as a necessary part of this doctrine, but what might be acknowledged and professed by all who believe that the Son and Spirit are the true God, though they may fall into very various and different sentiments about the way of explaining it.

And in the last place, I have attempted to do all this in such plain and easy language, that every private christian who reads this doctrine may understand it, so far as is necessary, may be established in the scriptural proofs of it, and may have his faith secured in this day of temptation. Upon this account I have been watchful against admitting those *latin* and *greek* words and terms of art, which have too often tended to flatter the vanity of men, and make them learned in mere words and syllables, and which have often proved an incumbrance and burden to their faith, rather than a support of it.

Having these views and designs always in my eye, the judicious reader will not wonder that I have omitted some forms of argument, and some texts of scripture which have been often called into this service. Some of these perhaps would have led me to speak of some particular scheme of explication which was contrary to my great design. Others did not strike me with the same satisfactory evidence, as some of my fathers or brethren have found from them. And though I will not rob them of their arguments, yet I beg leave to produce none but my own. And yet I may be bold to profess, that I believe this sacred doctrine as firmly as those who think they can prove it by a multitude of scriptures which I have omitted. And I hope this may be a sufficient apology, for any such omissions.

It is a most uncharitable and unrighteous thing, while a man is professing and proving any article of faith in most express language, and by convincing demonstrations, that he should be suspected of heresy, merely because he chuses to leave out some public phrases, or happens to drop some popular argument in that controversy, or excuses some doubtful text of scripture from that service. And yet this hath been too often the shameful practice, and the just reproach of many christians, in whom the fury of an ignorant zeal has prevailed above the heavenly graces of light and love.

At the same time I will take the freedom to declare, that when a man excepts against one argument for any sacred truth as feeble, and treats another with jest and



faillery; when he tells you this text is not authentic, and the other has quite a different sense; when he cavils at this term because it is not precisely and expressly written in scripture, and will express the same truth in no terms at all, nor mention any one argument that is sufficient to prove it, I think that man gives too just a suspicion that he is no great friend to that doctrine; and if he should tell me I have no reason to deny his orthodoxy, yet I am sure at best, there is reason enough to doubt of his prudence. But to proceed to my design.

The method which I have chosen is what the learned called "analytic." Beginning with the first and plainest principle of natural religion, and then, supposing the revelation of scripture, I have attempted to lead my reader onward to the most easy and yet most satisfying evidence of this glorious mystery of the gospel. Nor did I think it necessary to stand still often to observe and answer every objection. For these many times break in upon the order of a discourse, and divert the mind from the train of argument; and as doctor *Knight* well observes in the preface to his late sermons on this subject, "Objecting is endless; the pursuit of which wearies the mind, draws it too far from the main argument, and is apt to leave it in confusion and obscurity. Honest hearts and common understandings, whose concern is greater to discern truth, than to know the multiform windings of error, being once convinced of the goodness of the proofs that infer a doctrine, will be satisfied therewith, though they be not qualified to return an answer to every objector: For they well know that objections must fall, where the proofs of a doctrine are clear and conclusive."

I confess my thoughts sometimes ran out too far in a defence of some occasional positions, or incidental truths; but upon a review I have cut them all off from the body of this discourse, lest the thread of it should be too much interrupted, and have reserved them to be published in distinct essays or dissertations, if it be found needful.

After all our labours and studies, it is the good Spirit of God alone, who can lead us into all truth. If he please he can bless this little treatise which is the fruit of retirement, labour and prayer, and make it useful to instruct the ignorant, to settle the wavering, to guard those that are tempted, and to recover those that have gone astray. To this end I entreat my readers, that since it is but a little book, they would begin and read it through, that they may see all the parts of it in their proper connexion. Then I presume they will not take offence at any single sentence, which if separated from the rest of the work, might perhaps have given surprize or disgust to the weaker christians.

I conclude with an ardent address to heaven, that the sacred mysteries of our religion, and particularly this doctrine, which contains in it, and carries with it the substance and glory of the gospel, may prevail over all the clouds and powers of error. O may it never more be profaned by angry disputes and fruitless janglings! But be humbly received and piously improved, in order to pay all necessary honors and duties to the sacred three, which is the great design for which this doctrine was revealed: And thereby we shall effectually secure and evidence our own interest in the grace of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, the love of the Father, and the communion of the holy Spirit, Amen.

T H E

T H E  
**C H R I S T I A N D O C T R I N E**  
 O F T H E  
**T R I N I T Y.**  
 I N T R O D U C T I O N.

**T**H E R E were many thousands of souls brought to the saving knowledge of God, and trained up for heaven by the various revelations which God gave to mankind before our Lord *Jesus Christ* came into the world. His own counsels and contrivances wrought powerfully for the salvation both of the patriarchs and the jews under those darker dispensations, without their particular and explicit knowledge of those divine methods whereby that very salvation was to be effected. These were reserved as a mystery hidden from ages and generations to be revealed by the gospel in these later times. Therefore the gospel is called the "revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest by a clear interpretation of the scriptures of the prophets, and made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, *Rom. xvi. 25, 26*: that is, that the nations might shew their obedience to a revealing God, by believing this doctrine now it is clearly revealed, and the prophets are explained.

It is the gospel that teaches us how God the Father sent his own Son to assume human nature, and therein to fulfil all righteousness, and to make full satisfaction for our sins by his sufferings and death, in order to restore us to the favour of God. It is the gospel that tells us how our Lord *Jesus Christ* ascended to heaven, and receiving from the Father the promise of the Spirit sends him down to renew our natures to holiness, and to restore us to the image of God. And it is the gospel that calls us to believe or trust in this Lord *Jesus Christ*, the Son of God, in order to be restored to the favour of God by his death and righteousness, and to be renewed after the divine image, by the operations of his holy Spirit.

Thus we are taught by the gospel, what hand the Son and Spirit have in our salvation as well as the Father. The Father appears here as our sovereign and offended governor, condescending to be reconciled, and appointing this method for our recovery :



covery: The Son of God appears as a redeemer or reconciler; and the Spirit of God as a sanctifier; and we are taught to get an actual interest in these blessings by faith.

Upon this account, when we are admitted into the profession of the christian faith, the names of the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit, are joined together in the very ceremony of admission. We are baptized with this form of words, according to the institution of *Christ*, *Matth. xxviii. 19.* "Go teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost."

Thus though the ancient *jews* and patriarchs might be saved without an explicit knowledge of the special methods of this salvation, and the divine persons concerned in it, because they were not clearly revealed; yet since these are clearly revealed to us by *Christ* and his apostles in the new testament, and appointed to be a part both of our faith and our profession, it is evident that some knowledge of these divine persons, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and their several sacred offices, or an acquaintance with the doctrine of the blessed trinity, is now become a necessary part of our religion: So that I know not how any man can properly be called a christian without it.

It is certain, indeed, and must be confessed, that this sacred doctrine of the trinity has some great and unsearchable difficulties which attend the full explication of it, such as the wisest men in all ages have found too hard and too high for their comprehension; and yet it is as certain, that so much of this doctrine as is necessary to salvation, is plainly revealed in scripture, and easy to be understood; that the unlearned, and persons of the meanest capacity, may attain the knowledge of it: For the high way to heaven, which was to be revealed under the gospel, must be marked out with such plainness and evidence, "that the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein." *Isai. xxxv. 8.*

It shall be my business therefore, at present, to lead the unlearned christian, by soft and easy steps, into this mystery, so far as may furnish him with a sufficient knowledge of it for his own salvation, and shew him how to confirm and maintain his belief of it by the plain evidence of scripture, and to secure him from making shipwreck of his faith in a day of temptation. And I shall attempt to do all this without perplexing and embarrassing his mind with any of those various mazes of scheme and hypothesis, which men of learning have invented to explain and defend this sacred article of the christian faith.

The way wherein I shall pursue this design, is, by laying down the following propositions.

Proposition I. There is a God.

Proposition II. This God is the Creator of all things, the first and the eternal being, the greatest, the wisest, and the best of beings, the sovereign Lord and disposer of all his works, the righteous governor of his intellectual creatures, and the proper object of their worship.

Proposition III. There is, and there can be, but one true God, but one such God as agrees with the foregoing description.

Proposition IV. Since there can be but one God, the peculiar, divine and distinguishing characters of godhead cannot belong to any other being.

Proposition V. And God himself is so jealous of his own honour, and so concerned to maintain the dignity of his godhead, as never to suffer these peculiar distinguishing characters to be ascribed to any other besides himself.

Proposition VI.

Proposition VI. He is also so kind and faithful to his creatures, as to tell them what are these peculiar and distinguishing characters of godhead, that they may not run into this mistake and guilt of ascribing them to any other.

Proposition VII. The peculiar and distinguishing characters of godhead, are those names, titles, attributes, works and worship which God has assumed to himself in his word, exclusive of any other being; and has either asserted them expressly to belong only to himself, or left it sufficiently evident in his word, that they belong to him alone.

Proposition VIII. Yet these very names, titles, attributes, works and worship, which are peculiar to God, and incommunicable to another, are ascribed to three, by God himself, in his word; which three are distinguished by the names of Father, Son, and Spirit.

Proposition IX. There are also some other circumstantial but convincing evidences, that the Son and the Spirit have the true and proper godhead ascribed to them as well as the Father.

Proposition X. Thence it necessarily follows, that these three, viz. the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, have such an intimate and real communion in that one godhead, as is sufficient to justify the ascription of those peculiar and distinguishing divine characters to them.

Proposition XI. Since there is, and can be, but one true God, these three, who have such a communion in godhead, may properly be called the one God, or, the only true God.

Proposition XII. Though the Father, Son, and Spirit are but one God, yet there are such distinct properties, actions, characters and circumstances ascribed to these three, as are usually ascribed to three distinct persons among men.

Proposition XIII. Therefore it has been the custom of the christian church, in almost all ages, to use the word person, in order to describe these three distinctions of Father, Son and Spirit, and to call them three distinct persons.

Proposition XIV. Though the sacred three are evidently and plainly discovered in scripture to be one and the same God, and three distinct personal agents or persons; yet the scripture hath not in plain and evident language explained, and precisely determined, the particular way and manner, "how these three persons are one God, or, how this one godhead is in three persons."

Proposition XV. Thence I infer, that it can never be necessary to salvation to know the precise way and manner, how one godhead subsists in these three personal agents, or, "how these three persons are one God."

Proposition XVI. Yet we ought to believe the general doctrine of the trinity, viz. That these three personal agents, Father, Son, and Spirit, have some real communion in one godhead, though we cannot find out the precise way and manner of explaining it.

Proposition XVII. And wheresoever we meet with any thing in scripture that is incommunicably divine, ascribed to either of these three persons, we may venture to take it in the plain and obvious sense of the words, since we believe the true and eternal godhead to belong to them all.

Proposition XVIII. Where any thing inferior to the dignity of godhead is really and properly attributed in scripture to the person of the Son, or the holy Spirit, it may be easily imputed to some inferior nature united to the godhead in that person, or to some inferior character or office sustained by that person.

Proposition XIX.



Proposition XIX. Nor do these inferior nature or natures, characters or agencies, at all hinder our firm belief of the godhead of these three persons, which is so plainly expressed in scripture; nor should it abate or diminish our sacred regards to them.

Proposition XX. We are bound, therefore, to pay divine honours to each of the sacred three, viz. the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit, according to their distinct characters and offices assigned them in scripture.

Proposition XXI. In so doing, we shall effectually secure our own salvation: For the scripture has made our salvation to depend on those offices which these divine persons sustain, and the honours due to them according to those offices, rather than upon any deep philosophical notions of their essence and personalities, any nice and exact acquaintance with their mysterious union and distinction.

Proposition XXII. The man, therefore, who professes each of the sacred three, to have sufficient divine power and capacity to sustain the characters, and fulfil the offices attributed to them in scripture, and pays due honour to them according to those offices, may justly be owned by me, and received as a christian brother; though we may differ much in our notions and opinions about the explication of the blessed trinity, or though we may both be ignorant or doubtful of the true way of explaining it.

Now if these propositions are found agreeable to the mind and will of God in his word, then may his blessed Spirit furnish me with clearness of thought, with force of argument, and happiness of expression to explain and prove them, so far as to enlighten the understanding, and satisfy the conscience of humble and sincere christians in this great and glorious doctrine of the trinity; that they may pay their distinct honours to the sacred three, in this world of darkness and imperfection, and walk on rejoicing in their way to the world of perfect life and happiness! Amen.

## P R O P O S I T I O N I.

*There is a GOD.*

**I**T must be known by the light of nature, that there is a God, before we can reasonably have any thing to do with scripture, or believe his word. Now the shortest and plainest way to come at the knowledge of God by the light of nature, is by considering the whole frame of this visible world, and the various parts of it. Hereby we shall not only find that there is a God, but we shall learn in a great measure what is his nature also.

A man cannot open his eyes but he sees many objects round about him which did not make themselves: The birds, the beasts, and the fishes, the herbs, and the trees, the fire, and the water, all seem to confess that they were not their own creators, for they cannot preserve themselves. Nor did we give being to ourselves or to them, because we can neither preserve ourselves nor them in being.

Besides, there is an infinite variety of instances in the constant regular motions of the planets, the influences of the sun and moon, in the wonderful composition of plants and animals, and in their several properties and operations, as well as in the very structure of our own bodies, and the faculties of our minds; which sufficiently discover there must be some superior and divine power and wisdom, which both contrived and created their natures and our's, and gave being both to them and us.

Thus it appears that the first notion we have of God, by the light of nature, is the creator of all things. Thence it follows, that he must be before all those things which he has made; therefore he must be the first of beings.

And

And it is plain, that he could have no beginning, and that there was no time when God was not; for then he could never have begun to be; since there was nothing that could create him, nor can there be any reason why he should of himself start out of nothing into being at any moment, if he had not been before: So that since we have proved that there is a God, we may be sure that he ever was, or that he was from all eternity.

Now the same argument which proves that he had no beginning, will infer also, that he can have no end: For as nothing could give him being, nothing can take it away. He depends not on any thing for leave to exist, since nothing in nature could possibly concur or contribute any thing toward his existence. Nor does his being depend on any arbitrary act of his own will, for he did not create himself. Nor can he himself wish, or will, or desire not to be, because he is perfectly wise, and knows it is best for him for ever to exist; and, therefore, he must exist, or be for ever.

And this is what the learned call a necessary being; that is, one who ever was, and ever must be; without beginning and without end. And this, in many of their writings, is justly made to be the great and eminent distinction betwixt God and the creature; viz. that the creatures might be, or not be, as God pleases; but God always was, and always will be: He must necessarily have a being from everlasting to everlasting.

As his works discover his existence, or his being; so the greatness of his works shews the greatness of his power. He that made all things out of mere nothing, must be almighty: He that has contrived all things with such exquisite art, must be alwise and alknowing; and he that has furnished this lower world with such innumerable rich varieties of light and food, of colours, sounds, smells, and tastes, and materials for all the conveniences of life to support and to entertain our natures, he must be a being of unspeakable goodness.

It appears yet with fuller evidence, that God is the chiefest, the greatest, the wisest, and the best of beings, when we consider more particularly, that all the power, knowledge, wisdom, and goodness, all the virtues, and excellencies, and the very natures of all other beings are derived from God, and given to the creatures by God their Creator; and therefore he must, in some glorious and eminent manner, possess all perfections and excellencies himself, for nothing can give to another that which itself has not.

Thus "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work," as the holy *Psalmist* assures us, *Psal.* xix. 1. And thus, "The invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead, *Rom.* i. 20.

The light of reason, or nature, further teaches us, that such an almighty being, who by his own power and wisdom has created all things out of nothing, must needs be the sovereign Lord, the absolute possessor and proprietor of all his creatures, they must be all at his disposal, and under his government. And as for the intelligent parts of his creation, such as men and angels, it is the very law of their natures, that they ought to love, worship and obey him that made them, to pray to him for what they want, and to praise him for what they receive, and thence he becomes the proper object of worship.

Reason itself assures us, that he who hath shewn such exquisite wisdom, even in the formation of his inanimate creatures, and in his disposal and management of them agreeably to those purposes for which they are fitted, will manifest also the same wisdom in governing his intelligent creatures, and bestow those rewards or punishments



punishments on them for which they are fitted, agreeable to their tempers, characters and actions. And this is properly called the righteousness or equity of God, or his governing justice.

I have been much the longer in this proof of the being of God, in order to introduce the next proposition which expresses his nature, and contains the common and general sense of the word God.

## P R O P O S I T I O N    II.

*God is the Creator of all things, the first and the eternal being, the greatest, the wisest, and the best of beings, the sovereign Lord and disposer of all his works, the righteous governor of his intellectual creatures, and the proper object of their worship.*

**T**HIS description of God is drawn with apparent evidence from the very proof of his being. The same light of nature or reason which tells us that there is a God, does at the same time tell us what God is: and this being the plainest and the most obvious and easy way of coming to the knowledge of his existence, these must be the first, the plainest, and the easiest notions of godhead or divine nature, that mankind naturally obtains and receives.

But since the knowledge of God, by the light of reason, is so low, and feeble, and obscure in the greatest part of mankind, he has condescended to reveal both his being and his nature in his written word. This hath been attested with so many divine signs and miracles, as prove it beyond all controversy to be the word of the living God: And in this word of his he hath described his nature in the same manner as the light of reason would describe it; though in greater perfection, and with fuller assurance.

When, therefore, we use the word God properly, absolutely, and without any special limitation; some of these ideas will naturally come into the mind, and especially those of almighty, alwise, the creator, and the eternal. Therefore this has been the common sense of the word in heathen nations, even from all antiquity, and amongst all the thinking part of mankind, who have acknowledged one God only; and this is the general sense of the word God in the scripture, as might be made to appear by many quotations, if it were needful.

Hence it will follow, that those persons who make the word God to signify mere authority, dominion, or government, do much diminish the idea of it; they contract and narrow the sense of it in opposition to the common usage of the word in all languages, ages and nations, wherein the unity of God has been professed; they divert it from the common meaning of it in the lips of *jews*, heathens, and christians. And they would do well to consider, whether this is not done merely to serve some particular schemes of their own, and to support some hypothesis or opinion of their's, which otherwise could never be obtained.

I confess, the word God is used sometimes in the bible both in a figurative, and in a limited or imperfect sense.

I. It is used in a figurative or improper sense, to signify some character among creatures that hath a likeness or resemblance to any part of this description of God. So *Moses* the prophet is called "a god to *Pharaoh*," *Exod. vii. 1.* Because he carried divine authority with him in his message to *Pharaoh*, and wrought divine works

works before him, which were representations of God's government and his power. So angels are called gods, *Psal.* xcvi. 7. and in many other places, for the same reason. So prophets, judges and magistrates are called gods; *Psal.* lxxxii. 1. "He judgeth among the gods." Verse 6. "I said ye are gods." *John* x. 35. "He called them gods to whom the word of God came;" because they spoke and acted under divine influence, or in the name and authority of God.

2. This word God is used also in many scriptures in a limited or imperfect sense, to signify the object of worship, which is one part of the description of the true God. So *Isa.* xlv. 15. — "yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it." *Isa.* xxxvi. 18. "Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land." Verse 19. "Where are the gods of *Hamath* and *Arpad*? that is, their idols whom they worshipped. *Micah* iv. 5. "The people will walk every one in the name of his god," that is, that being, either real or imaginary, whom they worshipped. And probably, in this sense, the devil is called "the god of this world," *2 Cor.* iv. 4. because he was worshipped by the heathens under various names, as well as because he seems to have great power in this sinful world, by the permission of God.

But after all, there is, and there must be, such a distinction between the word God, when it is applied peculiarly to the true God, the Creator, and when it is applied to creatures, or to idols, as that the creature may not be mistaken for the Creator; nor an idol for the living and the true God.

Wheresoever, therefore, the word God is used in scripture, and it does not evidently appear to be used in any of these figurative, diminutive, and imperfect senses, we are naturally and reasonably led to understand it concerning the alwise and almighty Creator and governor of all things, the greatest, the wisest, and the best of beings.

### P R O P O S I T I O N III.

*There is, and there can be, but one true God, but one such God as agrees with the foregoing description.*

THE unity or oneness of the godhead, is a great truth derived from the light of nature, as well as from scripture.

The light of nature tells us, that there can be but one, who is the first, the wisest, and the best of beings; there can be but one almighty: And many of the ancient sages, in the heathen world, have found out this truth by their own reason, and maintained it with force of argument.

If I were to talk like a philosopher upon this head, I would prove that there could be but one God, because the very nature of God implies in it full perfection and complete al sufficiency; so that he can stand in need of nothing, because he has a sufficiency in himself for all conceivable purposes and ends. If there were therefore any other God, that other God would be a needless one, or an unnecessary being, which would destroy the very nature and notion of godhead; for God is a necessary being, or a being of absolute necessity, as we have proved before, and he cannot but exist.

But as my design is to assist the understanding of the meanest christians, I will rather have recourse to the plain words of scripture: And there are many places in the word of God where he asserts his own unity; *Deut.* vi. 4. "Hear, O *Israel*,



the Lord our God is one Lord." *Exod. xx. 3.* "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." *Isai. xliii. 10.* "Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me." *Isai. xlv. 8.* "Is there a God besides me? Yea, there is no God, I know not any." *Isai. xlv. 5.* I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God besides me."

The *jews* of old were so ready to be led away to the idolatry of their neighbour nations, and to worship more gods than one, that the blessed God thought it proper in his word to give them frequent repetitions of this great truth, to guard them against the danger of acknowledging any gods besides himself:—And it being a great part of the design of the gospel, to reform the heathen world from polytheism, or the worship of many gods, *Christ* and his apostles have taken care in the new testament to inculcate this divine truth again in express language. *Mark xii. 29.* The words of *Moses* are cited by our Lord *Jesus*, as the foundation of all religion. The first of all the commandments is, "Hear, O *Israel*, the Lord our God is one Lord." *Mark x. 18.* "There is none good but one, that is God." By which he means, there is none has such original and eternal and al sufficient goodness as he; *Gal. iii. 26.* "God is one." *Eph. iv. 6.* "One God and Father of all, who is above all." *1 Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6.* "An idol is nothing in the world, and there is none other God but one; for though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, as there be gods many and lords many; but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things."

We must, therefore, take care in searching out and expressing the doctrine of the trinity, that we do not make two or three distinct gods, lest we break in upon the foundation of all religion, whether natural, *jewish*, or christian.

#### P R O P O S I T I O N IV.

*Since there can be but one God, the peculiar, divine and distinguishing characters of godhead cannot belong to any other being.*

**T**HIS proposition is so evident, that I have no need to spend time in proving, that the essential and distinguishing marks and qualities of any one being can never belong to another: For otherwise there could be no certain distinction betwixt any two different beings in nature; and we should run into perpetual mistakes hourly, and take one for the other. If the distinguishing characters of fire could belong to earth or water, or the peculiar marks of human nature could be found in plants or brute animals, this would bring everlasting confusion into the affairs of life, and common language. Much more necessary is it that there should be the most evident marks of distinction between God and a creature, lest we should bring the same confusion into all our religion and worship, by mistaking the creature for God, and God for the creature.

P R O-

## P R O P O S I T I O N V.

*God himself is so jealous of his own honour, and so concerned to maintain the dignity of his godhead, as never to suffer these peculiar distinguishing characters of godhead to be ascribed to any other besides himself.*

**I**T is fit that godhead should support it's own dignity, and bear it's character high above all creatures; otherwise God could not be just and true to himself. It is necessary that the almighty maker, and sovereign governor of all, should maintain his state and majesty, and suffer nothing, which is not God, to approach too near the grandeur of godhead; nor will he bear it without high resentment and divine indignation.

This is what is properly called his jealousy in scripture. He is often described as a jealous God, and will not suffer creatures to share with him in his incommunicable glories. *Exod. xx. 3, 4, 5.* "Thou shalt have no other gods before me; Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." *Deut. iv. 23, 24.* "Take heed to yourselves lest you make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee; for the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." *Deut. vi. 13, 14, 15.* "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name: Ye shall not go after other gods, the gods of the people which are round about you, for the Lord thy God is a jealous God among you, lest the anger of the Lord thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth." To the same purpose speaks *Joshua*, chapter xxiv. verse 19. *Deut. xxxii. 16, 17.* "They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger; they sacrificed to devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not." verses 19, 20, 21. "When the Lord saw it he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons and his daughters: And he said, I will hide my face from them; they have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities." Such are the awful manifestations of God, in a way of jealousy, for his own name and the dignity of his godhead.

The heart of God is so much set upon it to exclude all rivals or competitors from any share in the prerogatives of godhead, that he borrows one of his names from his jealousy in this matter; *Exod. xxxiv. 14.* "Thou shalt worship no other God; for the Lord whose name is jealous, is a jealous God."

He declares solemnly, that his honour should not be given to another; nor will he bear that any thing should come near him, or be likened to him in the glory of his nature; *Isai. xlii. 8.* "I am the Lord, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another." *Isai. xlv. 9.* "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me." *Isai. xl. 18.* "To whom will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" Verse 25. "To whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the holy one." And when he threatens his vengeance against the worship of that which is not God, he speaks in the fire and fury of his jealousy, as it is often expressed in the language of the prophets.



## P R O P O S I T I O N VI.

*God is also so kind and faithful to his creatures, as to tell them what are these peculiar and distinguishing characters of godhead, that they may not run into this mistake and guilt of ascribing them to any other.*

**T**HOUGH men of learning and retirement among the heathens, who have devoted themselves to the study of philosophy, have found out several of these peculiar characters of godhead; and the light of reason, if well improved, is sufficient to teach all men so much of God, as to leave them "without excuse," *Rom. i. 19, 20.* Yet in our fallen and degenerate state we are so thoughtless and foolish, and our understanding is so feeble, so rash and giddy, that we are ready to commit mistakes in this solemn and important point. Therefore the blessed God in great condescension has told us in his word, what are the peculiar glories that belong to his nature, and the characters by which he will be known and distinguished from all that is not God.

And since he has separated a people to himself, and promised to give them the knowledge of himself, in order to his glory and their own happiness, he has been so kind to them, and so faithful to his covenant, as to mark out those distinguishing characters of godhead, by which he will be known, in a very evident manner; and that not in a single text or two, but in many places of holy scripture, that they may not thoughtlessly run into this hainous mistake, of ascribing godhead to any inferior natures, and incur the dreadful penalties which his jealousy has threatened.

## P R O P O S I T I O N VII.

*The peculiar and distinguishing characters of godhead are those names, titles, attributes, works and worship, which God has assumed to himself in his word, exclusive of any other being; and has either asserted them expressly to belong only to himself, or left it sufficiently evident in his word that they belong to him alone.*

**H**ERE I shall not insist on all the peculiar characters of godhead that may be found in scripture, but mention only a few, viz. such as in my opinion seem to carry the clearest evidence with them.

The peculiar divine names are chiefly these two; viz. the name *Jehovah*, and the name *GOD*, with some additional word of honour, as the true God, the great God, the mighty God, the only wise God, God and none else, and God blessed for ever.

The peculiar divine titles are, the God of *Abraham*, the Lord of hosts, King of kings, and Lord of lords, the first and the last.

The peculiar divine attributes are, omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence, eternity and immutability.

The peculiar divine works are, the creation and conservation of all things, the changing of the heart, and raising the dead.

The last peculiar character of godhead, is divine worship.

And

And, I think, the words of scripture where these characters of godhead are mentioned, will be most easily compared together, and set in the fairest light, if I refer them all to be cited under this next proposition.

# PROPOSITION VIII.

*Yet these very names, titles, attributes, works and worship, which are peculiar to God, and incommunicable to another, are ascribed to three by God himself in his word; which three are distinguished by the names Father, Son, and holy Spirit.*

ONE can hardly read a leaf of scripture, especially of the new testament, but we find some mention made of these three glorious agents, the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost: And though these words are not to be understood precisely in the same sense as when applied to men; yet the meaning of these words must answer the common use of them in some main respect; else surely such words would not have been used.

And if we consult the general sense of them in scripture, we shall find that this word Father signifies some superior character, from whom the Son derives, at least, his character of Sonship, and upon whom he depends so far as he is a Son, by whom he is sent on glorious errands.

The Son, who is also sometimes called the "only begotten of the Father," must have some very extraordinary relation to the Father more than any other being, and is often employed by the Father.

The holy Spirit has this title eminently given him as a being of a spiritual nature, as a prime agent in the affairs of the Father and Son; even as the spirit of a man knows and manages the affairs of a man; and he is called holy, because his great work is to sanctify and to make holy the children of men.

But of these things I shall speak more hereafter. My work is here to prove, that all three have the peculiar characters of godhead.

That the incommunicable divine names, &c. are ascribed to God the Father, the first in the sacred trinity, is universally agreed by all christians of all parties, there is therefore no need to spend time in proving it.

My present business, therefore, shall be to shew under each of these five heads, viz. names, titles, attributes, works and worship, what are the peculiar characters of godhead, and prove, first, that they are ascribed to *Christ*, the Son of God; and then, that several of them are ascribed also to the holy Spirit.

Before we enter on this argument, it may be proper to observe, that all parties allow that the second person in the trinity, or our Lord *Jesus Christ*, is sometimes called the angel or messenger of his Father; sometimes his servant, his wisdom, the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, the life, the light, &c. But the chief names he is called by, are, *υἱος*, "huios," the Son, or, *ὁ λόγος*, "logos," the reason or word of God. I mention this only to shew, that where we meet with him in scripture under these various names, we may know it is the same person. Nor need I take pains to prove this here, since I design to mention and make use of no place of scripture where any of these appellations can be controverted, without a particular vindication of them to this sense.

I proceed now to the argument proposed.

I. "The names of God ascribed to *Christ*."

1. *Jehovah*



1. *Jehovah* is a name peculiar to God; which we may infer from the very composition of the word, according to the opinion of the best *hebrew* critics: For it signifies being itself, he who was, and who is, and who shall be; and therein seems to denote the eternity and the unchangeableness of God, whose name is "I am that I am," *Exod.* iii. 14. And answers to the description of God, *Rev.* iv. 8. "The Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

But there are most express scriptures which prove the name *Jehovah* to be incommunicable; *Psal.* lxxxiii. 18. "Thou, whose name alone is *Jehovah*, art the most high over all the earth." *Isai.* xlv. 5. "I am *Jehovah*, and there is none else, there is no God besides me." *Isai.* xlii. 8. "I am *Jehovah*, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another."

Here let it be noted, for the benefit of unlearned christians, that where the word Lord is written in great letters in the old testament [LORD] the word in the *hebrew* is *Jehovah*; where it is written in small letters [Lord] it is some other word in the *hebrew*, as *Adon* or *Adonai*, &c. except perhaps one or two places where the printer hath made a mistake.

Now this name *Jehovah* is ascribed to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, or the Son of God, *Jer.* xxiii. 6. The righteous branch that was to be raised unto *David*, was the promised *Messiah* or *Christ*. And "this is the name whereby he shall be called the Lord our righteousness." It is evident, that this name is not ascribed to *Christ* as the name *Jehovah Nissi*, [the Lord is my banner] is given to an altar, *Exod.* xvii. 15. Or *Jehovah-shalom*, *Judges* vi. 24. [the Lord is peace.] Or as the name *Jehovah-shammah* [the Lord is there] is given to a city, *Ezek.* xlvi. 35. Because it is possible in all those places that God the Father may be signified. But *Christ* must be the person meant in these words, whether they be translated *Jehovah* our righteousness, or, *Jehovah* is our righteousness; for it is a promise concerning the times of the new testament, where *Christ* is often described as our righteousness, but God the Father is never described so, *1 Cor.* i. 30. *Christ Jesus* "is made unto us wisdom and righteousness."

There are other places in the old testament where the name *Jehovah* is given to *Christ* upon this very account; *Isa.* xlv. 24, 25. "Surely shall one say, In *Jehovah* have I righteousness and strength: In *Jehovah* shall all the seed of *Israel* be justified:" Which in the new testament are thus interpreted, *Rom.* v. 18. "By the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life." *2 Cor.* v. 21. *Christ*, "who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

*Christ* is called *Jehovah*, *Isa.* vi. 1, 9, 10. "I saw the Lord *Jehovah* sitting upon a throne, and he said, go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not; make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert and be healed." Compared with *John* xii. 40, 41. "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, and understand with their hearts, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said *Isaias*, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." It is manifest enough to any whose preconceived opinions do not turn them aside from the obvious sense of scripture, that our Lord *Jesus Christ* is the person here meant.

So *Zech.* xi. 12, 13. "They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver: And the Lord [*Jehovah*] said unto me, Cast it unto the potter, a goodly price that I was prized

prized at of them!" Compared with *Matth. xxvii. 9.* "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken, They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued." The prophet here tells us, it was the Lord *Jehovah* that was thus valued, and that was *Christ*, as *St. Matthew* applies it.

That the name *Jehovah* is applied also to *Christ* in other places, I shall take frequent notice:

2. The name God, with some additional honour, is another name whereby God is distinguished from creatures; as, "The true God, the great and mighty God, the only wise God, the only God, or God and none else, and God blessed for ever." For though upon some special account the word God is sometimes applied to a creature, yet it is without any honourable addition or epithet joined to it.

1. "The true God" is a distinguishing name. *John xvii. 3.* "This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God." Now *Christ* is so called, *1 John v. 20, 21.* "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son *Jesus Christ*. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols, Amen." It is very unlikely that the apostle *John* should conclude his epistle with such a solemn charge against idolatry, or the worshipping that which is not God, and yet in the foregoing verse leave his expression concerning the true God so easily and so naturally to be interpreted concerning *Christ Jesus*, if he were not the true God.

It is farther evident, that he who is called the eternal life in this verse, is the true God; and it is as evident, that *Christ* is called the life, and the eternal life, in the same epistle, *1 John i. 2.* "For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and shew unto you that eternal life, [that is, the Son of God] which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us."

2. "The great and the mighty God" is a distinguishing name. *Deut. x. 17.* "The Lord God, your God, is a great God, a mighty, and a terrible." *Jer. xxxii. 18, 19.* "The great, the mighty God, the Lord of hosts is his name. Great in counsel, and mighty in works." Which appellations are given to *Christ*. *Titus ii. 13.* "Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, or as it may be properly translated, our great God and Saviour *Jesus Christ*." *Isai. ix. 6.* "To us a child is born, to us a son is given, his name shall be called wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God."

3. "The only wise God" is a distinguishing name. *1 Tim. i. 17.* "To the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen." *Rom. xvi. 27.* "To God only wise be glory through *Jesus Christ* for ever, Amen." Which character is applied to *Christ* himself. *Jude, verses 24, 25.* "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen." Now that this doxology is ascribed to *Christ*, it appears not only from this that he is called our Saviour, which is *Christ*'s special title; but it is he who shall present the church without fault to himself, or, before the presence of his own glory. See *Eph. v. 25, 27.* "*Christ* loved the church, and gave himself for it,—that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle,—and without blemish."

4. "The only God," or, "God and none else," is another distinguishing name. *Deut. iv. 35, 39.* "The Lord he is God, and there is none else besides him." *Isai. xlv. 5.* "I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God beside me." Now whosoever will read the latter end of the *xlv. chapter of Isaiah*, from verse 15. to verse



verse 25. will find several expressions of the same kind. "I am the Lord, there is no God else beside me; I am God, and there is none else;" and yet they are applied to this person, who is eminently called the Saviour, verses 15, 21. in whom "*Israel* shall be saved with an everlasting salvation," verse 17. To whom "all the ends of the earth are to look that they may be saved," verse 22. In whom we "have righteousness and strength," verse 24. In whom "the seed of *Israel* shall be justified and shall glory," verse 25. And to whom "every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear," verse 23. All which characters belong to our Lord *Jesus Christ* in the common language of the new testament, and this 23d verse is particularly cited and applied to him. *Rom. xiv. 10, 11.* "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of *Christ*: For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." And whosoever will read that chapter from the 6th to the 12th verse, will find the words Lord, God, and *Christ*, used very promiscuously for one another.

5. "God blessed for ever" is also a distinguishing name. *2 Cor. xi. 31.* "The God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, which is blessed for evermore." *Rom. i. 25.* They "worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, Amen." Yet this name is given to *Christ*, *Rom. ix. 5.* "*Christ* who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen."

Here it is proper to be noted, that when the word God is applied to creatures in scripture, there is generally some degrading circumstance, or some diminishing expression added in the same place, to exclude them from any interest or share in the true godhead. But when it is ascribed to *Jesus Christ*, there are characters of additional honour often joined to it, to shew that he is the true God. So if *Satan* be called god, it is but the "god of this world," *2 Cor. iv. 4.* If *Moses* be called god, it is a god that was made, a god only to *Pharaoh*, and a god whose brother was a man. *Exod. vii. 1.* "I have made thee a god to *Pharaoh*, and *Aaron* thy brother shall be thy prophet." If magistrates are called gods, they are mortal gods, *Psal. lxxxii. 6.* "I have said ye are gods, but ye shall die like men." If angels are called gods, they are such gods as worship a superior God, *Psal. xcvi. 7.* "Worship him, all ye gods." But our Lord *Jesus* is called the "true God, the great and the mighty God, the only wise God, God, and there is none besides him, God-blessed for evermore," as we have shewn already; and that God, whom other gods, or angels, worship, as we shall shew hereafter.

## II. The titles of God ascribed to *Christ*.

1. "The God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*." This was the glorious name whereby God described himself when he sent *Moses* to fetch *Israel* out of the land of bondage; *Exod. iii. 6, 15.* "I am the God of thy father, the God of *Abraham*, &c. And God said to *Moses*, thus shalt thou say to the children of *Israel*, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob*, hath sent me to you. This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations."

And yet the person who speaks this, is called "the angel of the Lord." Verse 2. "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush; and it is plain, that he who sate or dwelt in the bush was God himself, *Exod. iii. 16.* and 4, 5. This is "the Lord God of the fathers, the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, the God of *Jacob*, who appeared to *Moses* in the bush;" all this is confirmed in the new testament, *Acts vii. 30.* where this history is repeated. And when

when *Moses* would bless the tribe of *Joseph* with a divine blessing and the favour of God, he calls it the "good will of him that dwelt in the bush," *Deut.* xxxiii. 16.

Here I shall take occasion to enlarge a little on these appearances of *Christ* to the patriarchs.

*Christ Jesus* is that God who called to *Abraham* and bid him offer up his Son, *Gen.* xxii. 1, &c. for he is called the angel of the Lord, verse 11. when he "called to him out of heaven, and said—Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy Son, thy only Son from me," that is, from that God who commanded him to be offered up. This was the angel of the covenant, and yet the God of *Abraham*.

"The angel which redeemed *Jacob* from all evil, is the God before whom his fathers *Abraham* and *Isaac* did walk, and the God which fed him all his life long," *Gen.* xlviii. 15, 16.

And it is universally agreed by the ancient and modern writers, that this angel was the same who appeared to *Abraham*, when "the word of the Lord came to him in a vision," *Gen.* xv. 1, 2. This was the Lord who appeared to him. *Gen.* xvii. 1. "And said, I am the almighty God." This is one of those "three men who appeared to *Abraham*," *Gen.* xviii. 1, 2. who is called *Jehovah*, verse 13, 14, &c. "This was the man who wrestled with *Jacob*," *Gen.* xxxii. 24. who is called God, verses 28, 30. who is styled the angel of God, the angel of the Lord, and the Lord, or *Jehovah*, promiscuously, in his appearance to *Gideon*, *Judg.* vi. 12, 14, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23. The captain of the Lord's host, appearing to *Joshua*, who is called the Lord, or *Jehovah*, *Josh.* v. 14, 15. compared with vi. 2. who is also the angel of God's presence, *Isai.* lxiii. 9. "The angel or messenger of the covenant," *Mal.* iii. 1. and "the angel in whom is the name of God," *Exod.* xxiii. 20, 21. or in whom godhead dwells; that is, the *Messiah*, or our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who appeared often to the patriarchs in a visible shape, as a prelude or token of his future incarnation.

Nor did he favour the patriarchs only with such a visit, but the prophets were blessed with it too. *Isai.* vi. is a plain instance of it, as we have shewn before, where *Isaiah* saw *Christ* in great magnificence and glory.

*Ezekiel* had the same favour also, and that frequently, *Ezek.* i. 26. "And above the firmament that was over the heads of the living creatures was the likeness of a throne—and the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it." Verse 28. "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord, or *Jehovah*; and when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake." Chapter iii. 23. He enjoyed the same vision. And chapter viii. 1, 2, 3, 4. He was favoured with it again, and "the glory of the God of *Israel* was there." chapter x. 15, 19, 20. The same again. And xi. 22.

*Amos* also saw God in the form of a man or angel, *Amos* vii. 7. for "he stood upon a wall with a plumb-line in his hand," and talked with him. And chapter ix. 1. He stood on the altar and spake to him.

*Zechariah*, in the first six chapters of his prophecy, conversed with the angel of the Lord in the form of a man, as chapter i. 9. and ii. 1, 3. and iii. 1, &c. Yet this angel sometimes seems to be the same with the Lord or *Jehovah*, as i. 19, 20. and ii. 1, 3, 5. and iii. 1, 2.

Now that most or all of these appearances was *Jesus Christ*, is generally owned by christians of all ages, and all parties; there are scarce any that have denied it.

And



And it is evident, that in these and other places this angel assumes the peculiar and distinguishing titles of the great God to himself: In his appearance to the more ancient fathers he called himself God almighty, as in *Exod.* vi. 4. But when he appeared to *Moses*, he made himself known by his name *Jehovah*, verses 2, 3. "And God spake unto *Moses*, and said unto him, I am the Lord, or *Jehovah*: And I appeared to *Abraham*, unto *Isaac*, and to *Jacob*, by the name of God almighty; but by my name *JEHOVAH* was I not known to them."

Now it was not possible for those to whom he appeared to distinguish him from the true and eternal God, when he used those express words, "I am God almighty, or al sufficient, I am *Jehovah*, the Lord; I am that I am; I am the God of *Abraham*, &c. and consequently they were necessarily exposed to the danger of idolatry, and in a manner, I may say, they were unavoidably led into it, if the person speaking to them were not really the true and eternal God, the proper object of divine worship.

It seems to me but a poor and feeble evasion to say, that all these magnificent and distinguishing names and titles of the great and blessed God might be assumed by the angel, or *Christ*, though he were but a creature, because he came in the name, and with the authority of the true God. 1. It is by no means agreeable to the majesty and high jealousy of God to give his name and glory thus to another, without any sufficient and most evident token of distinction. 2. It was too assuming and presumptuous in a creature thus to personate God, his maker, without some present and apparent distinguishing marks of his own inferiority. And, 3. It was too hard and invincible a temptation to *Abraham*, and *Jacob*, and *Moses* themselves, to practise idol-worship, and give divine honors to that which was not God.

It is therefore made clear to me with abundant evidence, that in all these appearances the true and eternal God himself was present; and, as it is expressed concerning *Christ*, *Col.* ii. 9, so in those figures and appearances, whether of light or fire, of a man or an angel, there dwelt all the fulness of the godhead bodily.

2. "The Lord of hosts" is another glorious and distinguishing title of God: He that is supreme over all the hosts or armies of heaven and earth. *2 Sam.* vi. 2. "God, whose name is called the Lord of hosts." *2 Sam.* vii. 26. "The Lord of hosts is God over *Israel*." *Psal.* xxiv. 10. "The Lord of hosts is the king of glory." *Isa.* i. 24. "Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty one of *Israel*." *Isa.* vi. 3. "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." And there are a multitude of places beside to this purpose in the word of God.

Yet this title is applied to *Christ* even in some of these very places, where it is mentioned as God's distinguishing character; *Hosea* xii. 3, 4, 5, where the history of *Jacob*'s wrestling with a man or angel is recorded, it is said, "By his strength he had power with God, yea he had power over the angel, and prevailed: He wept and made supplication unto him: He found him in *Bethel*, and there he spake with us. Even the Lord God of hosts, the Lord is his memorial." You see here that God, the Lord God of hosts, is the angel with whom *Jacob* wrestled. So *Isa.* viii. 13, 14: "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread; and he shall be for a sanctuary, but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of *Israel*." Which is interpreted concerning *Jesus Christ*, *1 Pet.* ii. 6, 8. He is the "chief corner stone laid in *Zion* elect and precious," as *Isa.* xxviii. 16. "and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence." Which appears

appears still with greater evidence, if you compare *Psal.* cxviii. 22. with *Matth* xxi. 42. and *Luke* ii. 34.

Many other instances of this kind we may find in the same prophet, as *Isai.* liv. 5. "Thy maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is his name, and thy redeemer the holy one of *Israel*, the God of the whole earth shall he be called;" compared with *2 Cor.* xi. 2. "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to *Christ*." God, our maker, is our husband, as the prophet speaks; and *Christ*, our redeemer, is the one husband to whom we are espoused by the apostle. But I proceed to the next.

3. "King of kings, and Lord of lords," is another title which God assumes to himself, *Deut.* x. 17. "The Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God and a mighty, and a terrible," &c. *1 Tim.* vi. 15, 16. "The blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, whom no man hath seen or can see: To him be honour and power everlasting, Amen." Yet this title is ascribed to *Christ*, *Rev.* xvii. 14. "The lamb shall overcome, for he is the Lord of lords, and King of kings." And *Rev.* xix. 13, 16. "His name is called the word of God; as *John* i. 1. "And he hath on his vesture, and on his thigh a name written King of kings, and Lord of lords."

4. "The first and the last" is a peculiar title of God, that is, the first cause and last end of all things. He by whom all things were made, and for whose glory they were designed. He who existed before all; and should all things cease to be, he would exist for ever the same, *Isai.* xli. 4. "I the Lord the first and with the last, I am he," *Isai.* xlv. 6. "Thus saith the Lord, the King of *Israel* and his redeemer, the Lord of hosts, I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God." So the xlviii. of *Isaiab.* verses 11, 12. "I will not give my glory to another. Harken to me, O *Jacob*, I am he, I am the first, I also am the last." Yet our Lord *Jesus* assumes this title himself, *Rev.* i. 17, 18. "Fear not, I am the first and the last, I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore," Amen. And *Rev.* ii. 8. "These things saith the first and the last, who was dead and is alive." *Rev.* i. 11. "I am alpha and omega, the first and the last." These verses without controversy belong to *Christ*; and perhaps the 8th verse also, "I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord; which is, and which was, and which is to come, the almighty."

### III. Attributes of God ascribed to *Christ*.

These are omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, eternity and immutability.

1. "Omniscience" or the knowledge of all things, and particularly of the heart of man, and his secret thoughts. This is a peculiar property of God, *Isa.* xli. 21, 23. "Produce your cause, saith the Lord, bring forth your strong reasons, saith the king of *Jacob*, shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods." *1 Kings* viii. 39. "For thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men." *Amos* iv. 13. "He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth to men what is his thought, the Lord, the God of hosts is his name." *Jer.* xvii. 9, 10. "The heart of man is deceitful above all things, who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of their doings."

Now this universal and extensive knowledge of all things, even of the hearts and of the thoughts of men, which is so special a property of godhead, is ascribed to



4. The attribute of "eternity," or without beginning or end, is also a peculiar distinguishing perfection of God, *Psal.* xc. 2. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." The eternity of God is also denoted by that title of his, "I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God," *Isai.* xlv. 6. Now our Lord *Jesus Christ* has this same eternity, for he is that God, "whose throne is for

for ever and ever," *Heb. i. 8.* He is "the alpha and omega, the first and the last," *Rev. i. 11.* and *ii. 8.* And the historical eternity of *Melchisedeck*, whose beginning of days and end of life are not mentioned in history, renders him a proper type of *Christ*, "the Son of God, who has no beginning of days, or end of life," and who must have real and true eternity to answer this type, *Heb. vii. 3.*

5. The last attribute I shall mention, is, "immutability," or unchangeableness. This God assumes to himself as a peculiar glory. See *Mal. iii. 6.* "I am the Lord, I change not." So is *Christ* unchangeable. *Heb. i. 12.* The heavens and earth "shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." *Heb. xiii. 8.* "*Jesus Christ* the same yesterday, to day, and for ever."

#### IV. Divine works, or operations ascribed to *Christ*.

"The creation of the world" is a work of almighty power, and belongs only to God, *Gen. i. 1.* "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." It is ascribed to him in scripture as a distinguishing character of godhead, *Heb. iii. 4.* "He that built all things is God." The Lord himself maintains this as his own prerogative, *Isai. xlv. 24.* "I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;" yet this almighty work is attributed to *Christ*, *John i. 1, 3.* "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him, and without him was nothing made that was made;" and verse 10. "The world was made by him." *Psal. cii. 25, 26, 27.* "Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands: They shall perish, but thou shalt endure, &c. All which three verses are spoken concerning *Christ*, as appears in *Heb. i. 10,* &c. "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands, &c."

And here it is proper to take notice of four things.

1. That the way whereby God creates all things, is by his word, to shew with what ease almighty power performs so divine a work, *Gen. i. 3.* "And God said, let there be light, and there was light." *Psal. xxxiii. 9.* "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." And *Heb. xi. 3.* "The worlds were framed by the word of God." And it is in the same manner that our Lord *Jesus Christ* is said to "uphold all things, viz. by the word of his power," *Heb. i. 3.* which signifies his mighty, or rather almighty word.

2. It may further be observed, that as God is the first cause of all created beings, so he is the last end of all. All things were made for him, as well as by him; *Rev. iv. 11.* "Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." *Heb. ii. 10.* "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things," which is a description of God. Even so all things were created for *Christ*, as well as by him. See *Col. i. 16, 17.* "By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him."

\* Here it may be noted, that it is not the word *Λόγος*, *logos*, that is used either in the *Heb. i. 3.* or in *Heb. xi. 3.* which is generally chosen when the Father is represented as acting by his Son or the personal word: But the word *Πῶμα*, *poma*, is used in both these places, to shew that the Son of God upholds the creation by a mere word of command, acting in the same easy, and almighty, and divine manner as the Father.



him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist," or are conserved in their being and appointed station and order.

3. I remark yet further under this head, that creation is such a peculiar work of God, that his existence or being, his very nature, power, and godhead are certainly and infallibly inferred from it, as the apostle *Paul* assures us, *Rom. i. 20*. "The invisible things of God from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead; so that they are without excuse;" even they who do not glorify that being as God, whom they may easily know by the work of creation. Thence it follows, that our Lord *Jesus Christ* must be the true God, must have eternal power and godhead, and must be glorified as God, since he created all things: For if any being that had not eternal power and godhead could create a world, then *St. Paul's* argument is feeble, and falls to the ground; then the visible things of the world do not prove the existence of an invisible, eternal and almighty God.

Human reason can find out no higher being than him, by whom all things were created, even that eternal power and godhead, which made all things, and was before all things, even from eternity. Now if *Jesus Christ* be the creator, then he is the highest being that reason can find out, and demands all the honours of true godhead.

4. It may be observed, in the last place, that if our Lord *Jesus Christ* were but a mere man, and not the creator of the heavens and the earth, and yet had the honour and worship of a God given to him, he seems to fall under that sentence of destruction which is pronounced by the true and living God, *Jer. x. 11*. "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens." But this leads me to the last distinguishing character of godhead.

#### V. "Divine worship ascribed to *Christ*."

Religious worship is so peculiar a prerogative of God that he will by no means suffer any meaner being to share in it. He assumes this character to himself with a divine jealousy, lest any thing beneath God should partake of it; *Deut. vi. 13, 14, 15*. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other gods, for the Lord thy God is a jealous God among you, lest the anger of the Lord thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth." This charge is repeated again, *Deut. x. 20*. and it is cited by our Lord *Jesus Christ* in these words, *Matth. iv. 10*. "It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The first command doubtless includes this meaning, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," that is, no other objects of worship; and *Exod. xxxiv. 14* repeats it, "Thou shalt worship no other God; for the Lord whose name is jealous, is a jealous God."

Yet it is abundantly evident, that our Lord *Jesus Christ* is the proper object of worship, both for angels and men, *Heb. i. 6*. "And again, when he bringeth the first begotten into the world, he saith, let all the angels of God worship him." Which is cited from *Psal. xcvi. 7*. "Worship him all ye gods:" Upon which account our Lord *Jesus Christ* may be called the God of gods, as well as the Father, *Deut. x. 17. Psal. cxxxvi. 2*. since angels, which are called gods, must worship him.

him. And let it be noted, that if our translation be right, this is not that worship or honour which is given him as mediator by the Father's appointment, upon the account of his sufferings and death, as it is elsewhere expressed, but upon the account of his original divine nature, and as God now taking flesh: Though it must be confessed the *greek* words rather bear this sense, "When he bringeth again his first begotten into the world," which may refer to his resurrection; yet still it is evident, that angels must worship him.

Our Lord *Jesus Christ* was worshipped as the true God, the Lord *Jehovah*, by the patriarchs, when he appeared unto them in a visible shape under the old testament.

He was worshipped also when he dwelt on earth very often; but I will not cite nor insist on particular instances of this, because some may doubt whether this were not sometimes a mere high degree of reverence and obeisance paid to him under the surprising influence of his miracles, which does scarce amount to religious worship, since his godhead was not then so fully discovered to his disciples, as to carry them above all doubt of his messiahship or his deity. But we have plain testimonies of divine worship paid to him after his resurrection; for *Thomas* honoured him as his Lord and his God, *John* xx. 28. He was worshipped by *Stephen* with his dying breath, *Acts* vii. 59. and with him that first martyr entrusted his departing soul. Nor do we ever find the least hint of his dislike or prohibition of worship. Nay, he commends the faith of *Thomas* calling him Lord and God. Whereas good men and angels have ever forbid worship to be paid to them, as being due to God alone. So when *Cornelius* worshipped *Peter*, *Acts* x. 26. "*Peter* forbid him and said, stand up; I myself also am a man." So when *John* worshipped the angel, *Rev.* xix. 10. and xxii. 8, 9, he refused the worship twice, "and said, see thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant; worship God," that is, God only is the proper object of thy worship.

It may be very properly observed concerning these two texts in the book of *Revelation*, where the angel refuses worship, and directs it to be paid only to God, that this was done after the full glorification of *Christ*, when God had appointed every knee to bow to him, and exalted him in our nature to his full majesty and dominion, and when he was known and adored by the church as the proper object of worship. Now if God only was to be worshipped in that day, it is a plain consequence, that *Christ* is God.

That this worship is due to *Christ*, is further confirmed by the express orders which are given by God himself, both in the old and new testament, for the worship of his Son *Jesus Christ*, *Psal.* xlv. 11. "He is thy Lord, and worship thou him." *John* v. 23. "That all men should honour the Son, as they honour the Father." And the great and blessed God, who is so jealous of his own prerogative and worship, would never have suffered those practices, much less would he have commanded them, if *Christ* had not been really the true God, and in some way and manner one with himself, and fit to receive the same divine honours.

Objection. Some may be ready to say, this is a sort of lower adoration, a subordinate sort of divine worship, that is paid to *Jesus Christ*, who is called God in scripture; whereas God the Father must have supreme divine worship, and reserves to himself still this supreme and distinguishing prerogative of true godhead.

Answer I. This seems to be but a vain evasion, because the scripture knows no such distinctions of supreme and subordinate divine or religious worship.

It must be granted, as I have hinted before, that the scripture sometimes uses the word worship for other honours than what are divine and religious, as, *1 Chron.* xxix. 20.

"They



"They bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord and the king." *Matth. xviii. 26.* "The servant fell down and worshipped his Lord." *Rev. iii. 9.* where *Christ* himself says to the church of *Sardis*, "I will make them to come and worship before thy feet:" And perhaps some who knew not that *Christ* was God, might pay this sort of worship to him on earth. Worship, in this sense, signifies only an extraordinary degree of honour paid to any superior person or character, even as we use the word in *english*, when we call several characters, or societies of men, worshipful. But this is not divine or religious worship, such as was appointed to be paid to *Christ* in his exalted state, and was never forbid even in his state of humiliation.

Now in religious and divine worship there is no mention made of two sorts or degrees of it. But if such distinctions were necessary to be observed in our worshipping the Father and the Son, it seems necessary that the scripture should have plainly and expressly told us of it somewhere, lest we run into the danger and hainous guilt of idolatry, by paying the same divine worship to both. There are so many plain expressions that encourage proper divine worship to be paid to *Christ*, and no plain expressions that give us any notion of a meaner or inferior divine worship, that either the scriptures seem defective in a most material point of religion, or *Jesus* must be worshipped with proper divine honours as the Father.

Answer II. "If *Christ* were to be worshipped merely with inferior worship, this would be to set up an inferior god; and thus the christian religion, whose professed design was to abolish polytheism among the nations, and to root out the worship of many gods, some of higher and some of lower rank, even this very christian religion would but more effectually establish it hereby; and the apostles would evidently build up again the things they destroyed. The very applying the name of God so frequently to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and ascribing any thing of divine characters or worship to him, if he be not the true and living God, would seem to be an unpardonable fault and gross absurdity in those men, I mean, the evangelists and the apostles: For they professed to be sent from God to destroy the heathen superstition, which consisted much in the worship of superior and inferior deities, and to turn the gentiles from these vanities to the knowledge and worship of the one true and living God. See *Acts* xiv. 15. *Acts* xviii. 23, 24. *Gal.* iv. 8.

Answer III. It is evident, that when *Christ* appeared to the patriarchs as the Lord *Jehovah*, and assumed the glorious names and titles of God in his converse with them, he was worshipped with supreme honour as the supreme God; for they thought him to be so, according to his own assertions, I am the Lord. They could have no notion of supreme and subordinate worship. Now it is very strange to suppose, what some would persuade us, that after all his services and sufferings he should be rewarded only with subordinate and inferior worship, who had so long before enjoyed the supreme.

The objectors will enquire then, what is that advancement of honour which *Christ* received as the reward of his sufferings? I answer, He was worshipped before God, now as god-man and mediator: Before he might be worshipped as *Θεός, λόγος*, God the word, now as God the word in flesh, as God incarnate; that the whole human nature might see and know itself united to the object of divine worship.

How far the blessed soul of our Lord *Jesus* may know and receive it's distinct share of the thanks and praises which ascend from the saints on earth, is a secret not so clearly discovered in scripture: Surely such sacred and inimitable zeal for his Father's glory, such astonishing compassion to lost mankind, such a life and such a death, such a conflict and such a victory, deserve the highest honours and glories that

that we can pay to a creature. And doubtless his exalted human nature receives them from all the blessed spirits above. Glory, and honour, and immortality, were the rewards promised to every son of *Adam* who fulfilled the law of God, *Rom. ii. 7.* and much more are they become due to the second *Adam*, the man *Christ Jesus*, who fulfilled the law in every point, and, by his most illustrious obedience, magnified it, and made it honourable beyond expression.

We may add further also, that since the man *Jesus* hath received so glorious an advancement at the right hand of God, we may reasonably suppose, that his human powers have a vast and extensive cognizance of his churches on earth; and that he partakes of all those circumstances of the honour done to his whole sacred person, which are not purely divine and incommunicable; though we have no warrant to separate and divide the human nature from the divine, in the honours which we pay him.

Still it is the godhead of *Christ* that is the standing and eternal ground of all that divine and religious worship, which we are bound to give him, though we borrow many motives from his life, his love, and his death. And since the great God has so often in his word assumed this sort of worship to himself, as his own prerogative and his distinguishing character, I am persuaded he would never have enjoined nor indulged worship to be paid to *Jesus Christ* in such a manner as is done in scripture, how great soever his services had been to God or man, if he had not the fulness of the godhead dwelling in him bodily.

This shall suffice to answer the objection arising from this distinction of higher and lower worship.

I might now run through the several particular acts of divine worship, which the scripture makes the peculiar rights of God, and yet ascribes them to *Christ*: Such as,

“Believing or trusting in him;” *John xiv. 1.* “Let not your heart be troubled, faith *Christ*; ye believe in God, believe also in me.” *Rom. xv. 12.* “In him shall the gentiles trust.”

“Calling upon him, and praying to him;” *Rom. x. 13.* “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, that is, *Christ*, shall be saved.” *Paul* prayed to him, to take away his thorn in the flesh; *2 Cor. xii. 8.* “For this I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me.”

“Adoring and praising him;” *Rev. v. 13.* “And every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and such as are in the sea, and ~~all~~ that are in them, heard I, saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the lamb for ever and ever.”

“Swearing by his name;” *Rom. ix. 1.* “I say the truth in *Christ*, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the holy Ghost.”

Now all these divine honours done to our Lord *Jesus*, are foretold in the old testament, and required or practised in the new testament, and would be so many affronts to the supreme majesty and dignity of the blessed God the Father, if *Jesus Christ* were not one and the same God with him, as we shall shew in the following propositions.

A variety of other texts might be cited to make good these seventh and eighth propositions; but I chuse rather, in this place, to content myself with citing those which are most unexceptionable, and have no just ground of controversy belonging to them.



To sum up all, let me make this one remark. That the places of scripture which I have brought to shew what are the peculiar and distinguishing characters of godhead, are so plain and easy to be understood, and those scriptures which apply these very same characters to our Lord *Jesus Christ* are so obvious, so evident, so naturally applicable to him, even in the divinest sense of them, that it needs a good deal of skill, and wit, and criticism to divert them to another sense: If it needed but half so much art and critical subtilty to apply those scriptures to *Jesus Christ*, as it does to turn them away from him, one might be tempted indeed to doubt his godhead, or to deny it.

It is plain that the *arian* and *socinian* doctrines, which deny our Lord *Jesus Christ* to be the true and eternal God, cannot be supported in opposition to such obvious evidences of scripture, without more skill and learning, more subtilty and nice arts of distinction to evade the sense of plain words, than the bulk of common christians can ever be furnished with. Day-labourers and tradesmen, children and servants, of the meanest rank, reading their bibles, would naturally be led into the belief of *Christ's* divinity; for they could never find out how to explain away such manifest expressions concerning the godhead of *Christ*, and make them signify a mere creature. Thence I would take leave to infer, that *arian* and *socinian* doctrines are not the doctrines of the bible, which in matters of such moment and consequence are and must be so easy, open and clear, that the ignorant and the unlearned may read and understand; "for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Now the plain christian, who reads his bible honestly, and follows the natural meaning of the words, will be led into the most dangerous mistakes, and to the practice of downright idolatry by the very bible itself, if these divine characters which I have mentioned are not really applicable to *Christ*. If *Christ* were not a partaker of true godhead, I can never imagine that the great God, who is so jealous of his own honour, and so kind and faithful to his people; and who knows how ready mankind is to take every occasion to run into idol-worship, would ever lay such stumbling-blocks or temptations in their way, and leave them in his word for the use of all ages. I cannot persuade myself that this God would have let those passages stand in the holy scriptures as our rule of faith and practice, which have such a natural tendency to diminish his own dignity, to give away his divine prerogatives to another, and to deceive the humble and the simple into such pernicious snares, and that in a point of so high and awful importance.

I proceed now to consider which of the peculiar divine characters are ascribed in scripture to the holy Ghost, and in this part of my discourse I shall be much briefer; not only because the scripture has not occasion to give half so many proofs of the godhead of the holy Spirit, but because if the true and proper godhead of *Christ* be fully proved, that of the holy Spirit will be easily admitted.

"Divine characters ascribed to the holy Spirit."

I. The peculiar name of God, which is ascribed to the holy Spirit in scripture, is *Jehovah*.

The Spirit of God is the same with *Jehovah*; *Isai. vi. 3.* "One of the seraphims cried to another, saying, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, in the original, it is *Jehovah*, the whole earth is full of his glory." And the voice of this *Jehovah* said, verse 9, 10. "Go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not, &c. Now that these words were spoken by the holy Ghost,

Ghost, is evident from *Acts* xxviii. 25, 26. "Well spake the holy Ghost by *Isaias* the prophet, unto our fathers, saying, go unto this people, and say, hearing ye shall hear, and not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive," &c. Nor is it any sufficient objection that these words are applied to *Christ*; *John* xii. 41. "These things, said *Isaias*, when he saw his, that is, *Christ*'s, glory, and spake of him." For *Christ* and the holy Ghost are one in godhead, as we shall shew hereafter.

*Deut.* xxxii. 12. "The Lord, or *Jehovah* alone did lead him," that is, *Israel*, in the wilderness. The prophet *Isaiab* speaking of this matter, ascribes it to the holy Spirit; *Isai.* lxiii. 14. "As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him, that is, *Israel*, to rest; so didst thou lead thy people to make thy name glorious." Now either the Spirit is *Jehovah*, or *Jehovah* alone did not lead them.

*Psal.* xcv. 3. "The Lord, or *Jehovah*, is a great God, and a great king above all gods." Verse 7, &c. "To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, and proved me, and saw my works. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation;" which words are cited by *St. Paul*, as spoken by the holy Ghost, *Heb.* iii. 7, 8, 9, &c. "Wherefore, as the holy Ghost saith, to day, if ye will hear his voice, &c. When your fathers tempted me, and I was grieved with that generation." And this is further confirmed, *Isai.* lxiii. 10. "They rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit." And *Stephen* reproving the jews, *Acts* vii. 51. said, "Ye do always resist the holy Ghost: As your fathers did, so do ye." Nor is it any just objection against this, that they were said to tempt *Christ* in the wilderness, *1 Cor.* x. 9. For in point of godhead *Christ* and the holy Spirit are one.

II. The peculiar titles of God, which seem to be used promiscuously for God the Father, or for the holy Spirit, are these, viz. the God of *Israel*, and the Lord of hosts.

The holy Spirit is represented as one with the "God of *Israel*," *2 Sam.* xxiii. 2, 3. "The Spirit of the Lord, or of *Jehovah*, spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of *Israel* said, the rock of *Israel* spake to me, he that ruleth over men must be just:" Thus the Spirit of the Lord is the same with the God and the rock of *Israel*.

He is also called the "Lord of hosts" in the text before cited, *Isai.* vi. on which I shall not enlarge.

III. The peculiar attributes of God ascribed to the holy Spirit, are, omnipresence and omniscience.

1. "Omnipresence" is attributed to the holy Spirit; *Psal.* cxxxix. 7. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? And whither shall I flee from thy presence?" It is in vain to flee from one who is every where.

*John* xiv. 16, 17. "The Spirit of truth" is promised to abide with the saints for ever, to be in them, to dwell in them; "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever: He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." *Rom.* viii. 11. He dwells in believers according to his promise, and makes them his holy temple. *1 Cor.* vi. 19. And is in all times, and in all places, wheresoever his saints and servants are, distributing his several gifts and graces. *1 Cor.* xii. 11. "All these worketh the self-same Spirit, dividing to every



man severally as he will :” Which expression carries as it were a divine sovereignty in it.

2. “Omniscience” belongs also to the holy Spirit; 1 *Cor.* ii. 10. “The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” It is “the Spirit of *Christ* that was in the prophets which testified a thousand years before-hand the sufferings of *Christ*,” 1 *Pet.* i. 11. And this is one peculiar property of godhead, *Isai.* xli. 23. where God challenges all other pretenders to godhead to vie with him. “Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods.” Many minute circumstances of the birth, life and death of *Christ*, as well as his resurrection and the propagation of the gospel, how exactly were they foretold by ancient prophets, and all through the inspiration of this Spirit of prophecy! 2 *Pet.* i. 21. “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Ghost.”

3. “Eternity” is another attribute of God: And since some properties of God are ascribed to the holy Spirit, eternity must in the same sense belong to him also. Perhaps it is he who is called the eternal Spirit, *Heb.* ix. 14. “The blood of *Christ*, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself,” &c. Though some persons rather understand this of the eternal godhead of our Lord *Jesus Christ* himself.

But whether it be the one or the other that is there designed, yet I would not build an argument upon the mere doubtful criticism of a *greek* word, and pretend it to be fully convincing, since that learned writer doctor *Waterland* himself, when he is pleading for the eternity of *Christ*, from *Micah* v. 2. “his goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting,” confesses the argument, “is but probable, since there is not ground sufficient for calling it certain and indisputable:” only this he adds by way of remark, “That whosoever should undertake to prove the eternity of God the Father, from any express words, either of the old or new testament, would find his proof liable to the same difficulty, and uncertainty, from the ambiguity of the *hebrew*, or *greek* phrases used to denote eternity.”

IV. “Divine works are attributed to the blessed Spirit, as creation of the world, the change of the heart or regeneration, and the raising the dead.”

1. “The work of creation,” which has been proved before to be a divine work, is attributed to him. *Job.* xxvi. 13. “By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens;” *Job.* xxxiii. 4. “The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the almighty has given me life.” *Psal.* xxxiii. 6. “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made: and all the hosts of them by the breath, or Spirit, of his mouth;” for it is the same word רוח “ruach, which is translated “Spirit” in the two foregoing texts, is rendered breath in this.

*Acts* iv. 24, 45. “Lord, thou art God, who hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant *David* said, why did the heathens rage?” &c. He who spake by the mouth of *David*, is here declared to be that God who is the creator of all things; but the holy Ghost is he who spake by the mouth of *David*, as appears from his own witness in 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 2, 3. “The Spirit of the Lord spake by me,” &c. Nor only does *David* the prophet thus witness concerning himself, but the apostle *Peter* does the same; *Acts* i. 16. “The holy Ghost, by the mouth of *David*, spake concerning *Judas*,” &c. Therefore the holy Ghost is the creator of all things.

2. The work of “changing the heart,” and of new creation, belongs to the great God; *Prov.* xxi. 1. “The heart even of kings is in the hand of the Lord; it is he that turneth them whithersoever he will.” And when the heart is turned from sin to God,

God, it is said to be his workmanship, *Eph. iii. 10*. By him we "are created unto good works." And *Jude* verse 1, "we are said to be sanctified by God the Father. God assumes this prerogative to himself, *Lev. xx. 8*. "I am the Lord which sanctifieth you." Yet this very work of new creation or sanctification is frequently in scripture ascribed to the holy Spirit; *Rom. xv. 16*. "The gentiles are sanctified by the holy Ghost." And we are "chosen to salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit," *2 Thess. ii. 13*. *1 Pet. i. 2*. Upon this account it is, that the saints who are described as "born of God," *John i. 13*. and *1 John v. 1, 3*. are said to be born of the Spirit, *John iii. 5, 6, 8*.

3. The work of "raising the dead" is a divine work, which is also ascribed to the holy Spirit. That it is a work which seems to be appropriated to godhead, St. Paul intimates, *Rom. iv. 17*. "He who quickens the dead, and calls the things which are not as though they were:" is a description of God. And God is described in the same manner, *Rom. viii. 11*. "He that raised up *Christ* from the dead." And that this was a glorious instance of his divine power, see *Eph. i. 19, 20*. Now this work, both of raising *Christ* and all the saints from the dead, is ascribed to the holy Spirit; *1 Pet. iii. 18*. "*Christ*—being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." *Rom. viii. 11*. "He that raised up *Christ* from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

I am come now to the last distinguishing character of godhead, and that is, to be the object of religious worship.

#### V. "Divine worship is paid to the holy Spirit."

"Baptism is a sacred ceremony, whereby we are devoted and given up to God the Father, and our Lord *Jesus Christ*. But the holy Spirit is not omitted in this piece of worship, *Matth. xxviii. 19*. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost." So that we are dedicated to the holy Ghost in this solemnity, even as we are to God the Father.

Here we may make this just remark, viz. That it can hardly be supposed, that *Christ* should appoint this solemn entrance into christianity, by baptizing men in the name of the one God and two mere creatures; but since they are joined, we may much rather conclude, that *Christ* himself, together with the holy Ghost, are partakers of true deity, as well as the Father; otherwise, as a late writer says, the office of baptism would be an invincible stumbling-block both to *jews* and gentiles.

The *jews* could not bear the least appearance of idolatry after they had smarted so severely for it under the *babylonish* captivity, and would never afterward suffer any to be joined with the true God in their worship. Thus St. Paul testifies concerning them, that "they abhorred idols," *Rom. ii. 22*.

And as for the gentiles, it was the main design of christianity to root out idolatry from among them, "to turn them from idols to the living God," *1 Thess. i. 9*.

Now if the Son and holy Ghost were inferior to the Father, and not the same God, the joining them with the Father in this initiating ordinance, would seem to have a very broad appearance of idolatry: And thus the *jews* would have been effectually prejudiced against the gospel; and the gentiles would have been rather confirmed in the worship of idols, or that which is not God.

Another thing wherein religious worship seems to be paid to the holy Spirit, is this, viz. that the apostle prays for the blessing to descend from the holy Spirit on the *Corinthians*, in the same way and manner in which the blessing of the Father and Son are prayed for; *2 Cor. xiii. 14*. "The grace of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, the love of God, and the communion of the holy Ghost, be with you all." If this be a petition



tion or prayer, it is a prayer to the sacred three. And the holy Ghost is the object of this worship as well as the Father or Son.

It seems evident also, that the holy Spirit was worshipped in some of those texts which were cited from the old testament, to prove the divine names, titles and attributes to belong to him, as *Isai. vi. Psal. xcvi. &c.* which I shall not repeat.

And since it is he who enlightens, who comforts, who regenerates, and sanctifies men, who bestows on the saints so many gifts and graces, distributing them severally as he will, since he knows the hearts of men, and changes and renews their hearts unto holiness, the very reason of things leads us to adore him, and gives sufficient foundation to pray to him for what gifts or graces we want, and to praise and give him thanks for what we have received, as shall be shewn hereafter.

I might take notice here, that several of these same divine characters are ascribed also to *Jesus Christ*, as the sanctification of sinners, the raising of the dead, &c. but the proofs of the divinity of *Christ* are sufficient and abundant without these helps.

Thus I have finished the eighth proposition, and shewn that these very names, titles, attributes, works and worship, which are peculiar to God, and incommunicable to another, are ascribed to three by God himself, in his word, which three are distinguished by the names of Father, Son and Spirit.

After all, suppose a man should object thus, You have pretended to prove the deity of the Son and Spirit, by the ascription of such properties, works and worship to them, as belong only to the true God: But how do you know that all these can never belong to any creature? As for instance, cannot God communicate to any inferior being a sort of omnipotency, and vest him with almighty power? Or omniscience, and give him universal knowledge? Or immutability, and make him unchangeable? Is it an impossible thing that any being inferior to the great God, should be capable of forming several parts of the creation? Of changing the hearts of men? Of raising the dead? And is there no sort of religious worship, thanksgiving, and praise, which can be given to any creature, upon the account of some extraordinary and spiritual benefits, received, or to be received from him? And if so, then the ascription of these things to the Son and Spirit, are not sufficient and certain proofs, that true and proper godhead is ascribed to them. I answer,

Answer. It is not within our present reach, nor does it necessarily concern us, to know how far the powers of a creature can go, how glorious, and powerful, and perfect a creature God can make, or how sublime worship or honours, he might have fitted a creature to receive: It is not for us to say, that in the nature of things, it is utterly impossible for any being beneath a God, to have any one of these powers or characters communicated to him: Yet we dare affirm this, that since God has assumed these properties, these works, this worship, and peculiarized them to himself in his word, and since he describes himself by these characters, to distinguish himself from all inferior beings, he would never suffer any mere creature to stand upon record in his word, with these powers, properties, and characters belonging to him; for this would be to give away his own distinguishing titles and properties. This would be to run counter to that holy jealousy, which he professes for his own name, and to bring perpetual confusion into all parts of religion, as I have shewn in the foregoing propositions.

## PROPOSITION IX.

*There are also some other circumstantial but convincing evidences, that the Son and the Spirit have the true and proper godhead ascribed to them, as well as the Father.*

**T**HERE are many things spoken concerning God, the true and the living God, in some parts of his word, which in other parts of it are ascribed to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, or to the blessed Spirit.

First, to our Lord *Jesus Christ*.

1. The final judgment of the world is ascribed to God. *Psal.* l. 6. "For God is judge himself." *Rom.* iii. 6. "Then how shall God judge the world?" And it is ascribed also to our Lord *Jesus Christ*. *Rom.* xiv. 10. "We must all stand before the judgment seat of *Christ*." *2 Tim.* iv. 1. "Our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing." And indeed how can we suppose a being, who has not divine perfections, capable of such a work? It seems to require an omniscient mind, and an almighty arm, to manifest the secrets of all hearts, and to discover and punish the infinite variety of secret wickednesses in the hearts of men, as well as proclaim and reward the secret workings of piety, in those that have loved God.

2. There is a glorious description of the triumph of God, *Psal.* lxxviii. 4, 8, 17, 18. "He rides upon the heavens by his name, *Jah*: The earth shook, the heavens dropped, at the presence of God, the God of *Israel*. The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: The Lord is among them as in *Sinai*, in the holy place: Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men;" which is applied to the ascension of *Christ* into heaven. *Eph.* iv. 8, 10. "Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. He that descended, is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." *Christ* is therefore this Lord, this God, this *Jehovah* or *Jah*, whose triumph is there described.

3. The children of *Israel*, as it is related in *Psal.* lxxviii. 56. "tempted and provoked the most high God;" which is asserted concerning *Christ*, *1 Cor.* x. 9. "Neither let us tempt *Christ*, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed," &c. Therefore the tempting of *Christ* is a tempting of the most high God.

4. The kingdom of God is an everlasting kingdom, *Psal.* cxlv. 13. "and his dominion endures through all generations." Which honour is ascribed to *Christ* in a citation of the xlv. *Psal.*, by St. Paul, *Heb.* i. 8. "But unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." And in many other places.

5. *Isaiah* prophesies chapter vii. 14. "A virgin shall bear a Son, and shall call his name *Immanuel*." Which is cited by *Matth.* i. 23. and his name is interpreted God with us: And this is abundantly confirmed, *John* i. 11, 14, "The Word, who was God, was made flesh, and dwelt among us." *2 Tim.* iii. 16. "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh."

6. *John* the baptist was foretold to prepare the way for *Christ*, who is called God, and *Jehovah*, by the prophet *Isai.* xl. 3. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, [*Jehovah*] make straight in the desert a high way for our God." Which is cited and applied to *John* as the fore-runner of *Christ*, by St. *Matth.* iii. 3. "This is he that was spoken of by the prophet *Isaiah*,



*Isaiah*, saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths strait."

And here it may be observed, that the title "Lord God," which answers to *Jehovah Elohim*, an incommunicable name of God, is given to *Christ*, when *John* the baptist is described as his fore-runner, *Luke* i. 16, 17. "And many of the children of *Israel* shall he turn to the Lord their God; and he shall go before HIM in the Spirit and power of *Elias*." The word HIM, that is, *Christ*, is immediately connected with the Lord their God in the foregoing verse; so that *Christ* is the Lord our God. See more under the 13th and 17th particulars.

7. God's universal propriety in all things, and his dominion over all things, are asserted in many scriptures, *Psal.* ciii. 19. "His kingdom ruleth over all." And yet *Christ* says to the Father, even before his death and resurrection, *John* xvii. 10. "All things that are mine, are thine, and all things that are thine, are mine. *John* xvi. 15. "All things that the Father hath are mine." And as *Christ* is called Lord over all, *Rom.* x. 12. so we find in *Acts* x. 36. "*Christ* is Lord of all."

8. The prerogative to forgive sins is assumed by God himself, as a divine character, *Isai.* xliii. 25. "I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, and will not remember thy sins." Yet *Mark* ii. 5. "*Christ* speaks to the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," *Acts* vii. 60. *Stephen* prays to *Christ*, "Lord lay not this sin to their charge." And the apostle *Paul* exhorts the christians, *Col.* iii. 13. "Even as *Christ* forgave you, so also do ye."

9. The reverence and subjection, which the great God demands for himself, by the prophet *Isaiah*, is attributed to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, by the apostle *Paul* in his epistle to the *Romans*. Compare *Isai.* xlv. 23. with *Rom.* xiv. 10, 11. The words of the prophet are, "I have sworn by myself, that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear." And the apostle says, "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of *Christ*." For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

10. The blessed God excludes every thing from comparison or competition with himself, *Isai.* xlv. 5. "To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?" Yet our Lord *Jesus Christ* says concerning himself, *John* xiv. 9. "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father;" and the apostle *Paul* adds, *Heb.* i. 3. "He is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person;" and *Philip.* ii. 6. "He thought it no robbery to be equal with God;" though it must be confessed, that the criticisms which attend this last named text, take off something from it's force and evidence, and render the sense of it a little dubious.

11. *Christ* is that glorious person, "in whom dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily." *Col.* ii. 9. which is too exalted an expression to be given to a mere creature, if the godhead or divine nature were not so united to the man *Christ Jesus*, as to render him one complex person, God and man.

It is true, that the apostle prays for the *Ephesians*, that they "may be filled with all the fulness of God," *Eph.* iii. 19. But this can mean no more than a fulness of those gifts, graces, and manifestations of God, which the primitive christians enjoyed and hoped for. But the word godhead is never used to signify gifts and graces, but only the divine nature, which in it's perfection and fulness, dwelt in this peculiar and transcendent manner in *Christ* alone, and not in his saints. And the addition of

of the word, bodily, seems to shew a peculiar union of the godhead to the human nature or body, of our Lord *Jesus Christ*.

12. Our faith and trust in *Christ*, is the same with faith and trust in God, as appears, *Jer. xvii. 5, 7*. "Curst be the man that trusteth in man; blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." Compared with *Psal. ii. 12*. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him," that is, *Christ*.

13. *Christ* is the Lord our God, by whom we are saved, *Hos. i. 7*. "The Lord said, "I will have mercy on the house of *Judab*, and will save them by the Lord, [*Jehovah*]; their God," compared with *Luke ii. 11*. "Unto you is born in the city of *David* a Saviour, which is *Christ*, the Lord." God the Father who is *Jehovah*, saves his church by his Son, who is also *Jehovah* and their God.

14. That glorious person who is called "the Spirit of God," *Rom. viii. 9*, and in many other places of scripture, is also called "the Spirit of *Christ*," in that very same verse, as well as *1 Pet. i. 11*. "and the Spirit of his Son," *Gal. iv. 6*. and as he is promised to be "poured out on all flesh," by the Lord our God, *Joel ii. 27, 28*: this was accomplished, *Acts ii. 16*. when *Christ* "shed forth this Spirit," verse 33. and baptized the disciples "with the holy Ghost, and with fire," as *Matth. iii. 11*. Thence it appears, that *Christ* is that God to whom the Spirit belongs, and he sends it.

15. *Christ*'s own resurrection is attributed to God the Father, *Rom. vi. 4*. and to the holy Spirit, *1 Pet. iii. 18*. and yet *Christ* ascribed it to himself, *John ii. 19, 21*. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up, which he spake of the temple of his body;" this shews, that the same divine power and godhead of the Father, which raised up *Christ*, dwelt also in the Son and Spirit.

16. That it was our Lord *Jesus Christ* who died for us, is abundantly manifest from all the new testament; and yet *Acts xx. 28*. it is said, "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." And *1 John iii. 16*. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." So that he who shed his blood, and laid down his life for sinners, was the true God: He came into the world, and was born of a virgin, and took upon him the name of *Emmanuel*, or God with us, God in our nature, that he might have flesh and blood, which he gave for the redemption of his people. See more under the last particular.

17. After the resurrection of *Christ*, the apostle *Thomas*, in a rapture of faith, calls him, "my Lord, and my God," *John xx. 28*. And our Saviour is so far from reproving him, that he commends him, and pronounces those blessed, who should believe the same doctrine, which he professed, without having the same sensible advantages. Now where the words Lord God are thus joined, it looks so like the incommunicable title of God, by which he is often described in the old testament, that *Christ* would never have suffered these words of *Thomas* to pass without a reproof, if he himself had not a real oneness with the great God, and a right to this incommunicable title.

By a comparison of this with what has been said before concerning the visible appearances of God of old, we may grow bold and say, "Surely this was the Lord God, whose voice *Adam* heard in the garden," *Gen. iii. 8*. This was the "Lord God of *Abraham*," *Gen. xxviii. 13*. "The Lord God of your fathers in the burning bush," *Exod. iii. 15*, &c.

18. Whereas it is said, *Rev. xxii. 6*. "The Lord God of the holy prophets, sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done." It is added,



added, verse 16. "I *Jesus* have sent my angel, to testify to you these things in the churches." Whence we may reasonably suppose, that our Lord *Jesus*, and the Lord God of the prophets, have such an intimate relation to, and union with one another, that these two names may be used without danger, the one for the other. For *Christ* is the Lord God of the prophets, as well as the Lord God of *Abraham*.

19. There are many other titles and characters, attributed to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and that so often, and in such a manner, as seems to raise him high above the character of creatures, so that I can hardly think these titles would have been thus attributed to him in scripture, if he had not godhead in him, even though he had been never so glorious, and exalted a creature.

He is called the "truth," *John* xiv. 6. The "amen, the faithful and the true witness," *Rev.* iii. 14. which seems to be the name given to God himself, by *Isai.* lxxv. 16. where prophesying of the times of the gospel, he says, that men shall "bless themselves in the God, "amen," and shall swear by the God, "amen," which we translate the God of truth." It is in this "amen," in whom the nations of the earth should be blessed, and by whose name they should swear, in the days of christianity, when "the new heavens and earth are created," verse 17.

*Christ* is called the "light," absolutely, and without limitation, *John* i. 4. Now light in such an absolute way of expression, is one of the titles of God, *1 John* i. 5. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

He is called the "life," *1 John* i. 2. "Truth and life," *John* xiv. 6. "The resurrection and the life," *John* xi. 25. and the "word of life," *1 John* i. 1. "Eternal life," verse 2, and chapter v. 20. Now the living God that has life in himself, and gives life to all things, is a glorious title and character of God, in many places of scripture. But this seems to be too nearly imitated in these titles given to *Christ*, if he were not God.

*Christ* is called the "word," "who was with God, and who was God," *John* i. 1. He was in so close a union with the true God the Father, and so much one with him, that he may justly be called the true God; and especially when there is one of the characters of true godhead immediately subjoined, viz. that "all things were made by him," verse 3.

The "word" is a frequent name of *Christ* in the new testament, especially in the writings of the apostle *John*: And some critics well skilled in *jewish* and *hebrew* language, have given us a number of instances, where *Christ* is called the word of God, and word of the Lord, in the old testament also. He is called the "living word," *Heb.* iv. 12, 13, as it should be rendered. "The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Which text carries something too sublime in it for any mere creature; and yet christian writers have generally explained this text, concerning our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who is the living word of God, speaking to men, in, and by the word of his gospel.

Now I will easily grant, that any one of these terms, truth, light, life, the word, &c. if upon some particular occasion only, it had been applied to *Christ*, would not have been sufficient to prove him to be true God: Yet when all these are applied to *Christ*, and that in such a manner, or sometimes with such epithets and adjuncts, and in several places of scripture, it seems to raise our thoughts of *Christ* necessarily above  
all

all created beings, and leads us to ascribe true godhead to him: And especially when these scriptures are considered, under the light and influence of many other texts, which have been cited before, where true and eternal godhead is without all doubt attributed to him.

20. I close all these circumstantial evidences, with that common argument, which is found in the lips of almost all christians, to prove the divinity of *Christ*, viz. that nothing less than the blood of him that was true God, could make satisfaction to divine justice, equal to the offences that were given it by our sins. The argument seems thus far, at least, to have a convincing force in it. It is said, that, "without blood there is no remission," *Heb. ix. 22.* and it is said also, that "it was not possible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sin." *Heb. viii. 3.* Now I cannot see any certain reason, why God might not have appointed the blood of bulls and goats, to be a sufficient atonement for our sins; or why it was impossible that it should be sufficient, but upon this account only, because it was not an equivalent. For if the justice of God would have been satisfied with any thing less than an equivalent, how can it be said, that it was not possible for the blood of animals to have been appointed for that end, by the sovereign will of God?

But if the governing justice of God insisted upon an equivalent sacrifice, or a satisfaction equal to all the infinite offences of the millions of mankind that are redeemed, then they who deny the godhead of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, are obliged to shew where this equivalent is to be found. I must declare my opinion, that it is the dignity of the man *Christ Jesus*, as he is united to God, and one with God, that entered into the merit of all his sufferings, and made the price of our redemption an abundant satisfaction for sin, and a glorious equivalent for all the sinners that were redeemed, because they were the sufferings of him who was God.

These are some circumstantial evidences, which shew, that true and proper godhead is ascribed to our Lord *Jesus* in scripture.

I proceed therefore,

Secondly, To produce the same sort of evidences, concerning the divinity of the holy Ghost.

1. The inspiration of the prophets, and other holy writers, is attributed to God, *Heb. i. 1.* "God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers, by the prophets," &c. And *2 Tim. iii. 16.* "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." But this very work of inspiration is frequently ascribed to the holy Spirit, *2 Sam. xxiii. 2.* "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me." *Ezek. xi. 5.* "The Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and said unto me, speak," &c. *2 Pet. i. 21.* "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Ghost." Therefore the holy Ghost is God.

2. The body of *Christ* is said to be conceived in the virgin *Mary*, by the operation "of the holy Ghost," *Mat. i. 20.* and by the over-shadowing power of the highest," *Luke i. 35.* that is, the holy Spirit by whom divine power is exerted; and yet for this very reason *Christ* is called the Son of God, because he was conceived by the influence of the holy Ghost; which would hardly have been expressed in that manner, if the holy Ghost had not been God.

3. Lying to the holy Ghost, is lying to God, *Acts v. 3, 4.* "Why hath *Satan* filled thy heart, to lie to the holy Ghost? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." The holy Spirit seems to be called God in this text.

4. That God who dwells in us as his temple, is the holy Spirit, *2 Cor. vi. 16.* "Ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them."



Compared with 1 Cor. vi. 19. "Know you not, that your body is the temple of the holy Ghost which is in you." Now for what reason can any thing be called the temple of God, in God's own word, but because God himself dwells in it?

5. To which I might subjoin in the last place, that blasphemy against the holy Ghost has a greater penalty annexed to it under the gospel, than blaspheming against God or *Christ*. See *Matth.* xii. 31, 32. "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: But whosoever speaketh against the holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in that which is to come." Now it is not to be supposed, that if the holy Ghost were but a mere creature, the sin of blasphemy committed against him, should have a more express and dreadful threatening of utter destruction pronounced against it, than blasphemy against God the Father, or against his Son, who is his express image.

I grant, that the most obvious and direct sense of that threatening, is to denounce damnation, without hope, upon those who shall wilfully and utterly reject the last and fullest demonstrations of the *Messiah*, and the brightest evidence of the gospel, by resisting the convictions of the holy Ghost, in all his miraculous operations. Yet I think it may be worth our enquiry, whether this solemn and awful denunciation of judgment, against those obstinate resisters of the gospel, and blasphemers of the holy Ghost, might not be written in such express and dreadful language to stand as a sacred fence and guard, against any attempts to diminish his divine dignity.

Thus I have fulfilled the proposal in the ninth proposition, and shewn a variety of other evidences of the deity of the Son, and of the holy Spirit.

I will not pretend, that every text which I have here cited, is so plainly or necessarily determined, to the sense in which I have cited it, as to be free from all objections: Though the greatest part of them cannot reasonably be construed to any other sense, without an unnatural strain and force put upon them, to make them serve some *arian* or *socinian* scheme. And there is just reason to believe, that the all-wise God would never have expressed himself in these scriptures, in such a manner, and used the names of God, \**Lord*, *Jehovah*, so promiscuously in speaking of *Christ*, and of the holy Spirit, and that without any guard, any exception or limitation, if there had been any error or danger in believing *Christ* or the Spirit, to have proper godhead in them.

I do not pretend to instruct the learned world; my design here was to write for private and unlearned christians, and to lead them by the fairest and most obvious sense of scripture, into some acquaintance with the great doctrine of the trinity. And it is my settled opinion, that a christian can never safely build his faith, in any important article of religion, upon such scriptures as want a great deal of art, and labour, and critical skill, to make them speak that article plainly.

Yet because the adversaries of our faith, have endeavoured to pervert the natural sense of many a text, those who have a mind to see how the sense of several of these scriptures is confirmed, by just criticism and reasoning, in opposition to the cavils and objections of men, may consult such authors, as have written largely on this subject, as bishop *Pearson*, doctor *Barrow*, bishop *Bull*, doctor *Owen*, &c. in the last age, and more lately Mr. *Boyse*, and doctor *Waterland*, in their treatises of the divinity of *Christ*, doctor *Waterland's* sermons on that subject, Mr. *Samuel Mather*, in his two discourses on the trinity, and the godhead of the holy Ghost, Mr. *Guyse's*

two

\* See the two last paragraphs, under proposition II. page 425.

two volumes of sermons on the deity of *Christ*, and the holy Spirit, and doctor *Knight's* sermons on that subject, with several others.

I would remark yet further, that though several of these scriptures taken singly and alone, will not certainly prove that the peculiar divine characters are ascribed to the Son and the Spirit, because some of them may be otherwise construed; yet when they stand in such a light as I have set them in, and run parallel to, and are connected with so great a number of other scriptures, that certainly ascribe godhead to the Son and Spirit; I think, the most, if not all, of these may serve to brighten the evidence, and inforce the conviction.

### P R O P O S I T I O N . X.

*Thence it necessarily follows that these three, viz. the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit, have such an intimate and real communion in that one godhead, as is sufficient to justify the ascription of those peculiar and distinguishing divine characters to them.*

**I**T was the great design of God to discover his nature and his will, and to make himself known to the children of men, By all his revelations to mankind: And when he employed holy men to write his word, it was to preserve these divine discoveries of himself uncorrupted, and to deliver them down to all ages, that he might be known and worshipped according to those revelations of himself, which he hath made. It is only by these divine and distinguishing characters which he has assumed, and peculiarized to himself in his word, that we know what and who God is: Now we can never imagine, that a God who is so jealous of his own honour, and so kind and faithful to his creatures, should ever suffer such peculiar and distinguishing characters of godhead, to be ascribed in such a multitude of places of his own word to any thing that is not God, lest he thereby give away all that honour and glory, which it is the very design of his word to appropriate and reserve to himself, and lest he should lead his own people into a dangerous error.

Though I have mentioned this once or twice before, yet my reader will forgive me that I repeat it again, because I would have him always keep it in his eye, and have it deeply impressed upon his mind, as an argument, in my esteem, of irresistible evidence, and uncontrollable force.

The Son and the Spirit, who have these peculiar divine characters ascribed to them, must therefore have some real and proper communion in the divine nature, some participation or share in the true and eternal godhead: Otherwise the word of God, which was written for our instruction, would be more ready to deceive us than to lead us into truth, and would thereby impeach both the goodness and faithfulness of God.

Let me make in this place two remarks.

Remark I. If any of my readers should think they can refute above twenty of the arguments that I have used to prove the godhead of *Christ*, and the holy Spirit, by giving those scriptures another turn of sense; yet let them remember that they cannot go fairly into a denial of their godhead, till they have refuted them all, which I am fully persuaded they will never be able to do.

Remark II. I think I ought here to mention again that which was hinted before, viz. That though the ascriptions of deity to the blessed Spirit are not written in scripture with half so much frequency or evidence, as those ascriptions of deity to the Son of God: Yet if the deity of the Son be well confirmed, that of the holy Spirit will



will be readily granted by all. Every proof therefore of the godhead of *Christ* may be counted a consequential scripture proof of the godhead of the holy Ghost.

### A moral ARGUMENT.

Before I dismiss this proposition, I would ask leave to add one moral argument, to prove that the Son and holy Spirit have real communion in the divine nature, as well as the Father.

The greatest number of christians since the days of the apostles, the most religious, the most holy of men, and multitudes of glorious confessors and martyrs, have believed this doctrine of the divinity of the Son and Spirit, and under the influence of this belief have paid divine honours to them both: And this many of them have done with such concurring circumstances, that carry in them a good force of argument, viz. they have worshipped them as God. 1. After they have sought the knowledge of the truth with utmost diligence and prayer. 2. When they have been in the holiest and most heavenly frames of spirit, and in their devoutest hours. 3. When they have been under the most sensible impressions of the love of the Father, and the Son, and under the most quickening influences of the blessed Spirit himself. 4. In the devotions of a death bed, and in the songs and doxologies of martyrdom.

Now can we suppose that, in such devout and glorious seasons as these are, God the Father should ever thus manifest his own love to souls that are degrading him by worshipping another god? That *Christ Jesus* should reveal himself in his dying love to souls that are practising idolatry, and worshipping himself, instead of the true God? Or can we believe that the blessed Spirit should give his influences, and his consolations, to encourage and assist such false worship, and himself assume these divine honours, if he had no title to godhead? Or can we imagine that the true and gracious God, should suffer such multitudes of holy souls to be deluded and given up, to believe a lie in such an awful and important point, in their most devout moments, and in their dying hour?

### P R O P O S I T I O N X I.

*Since there is and can be but one true God, these three, who have such a communion in godhead, may properly be called the one God, or the only true God.*

**T**HE reason of it is this. Because, if God "will not give his glory, and his name to any other," as we have before proved, *Isai. xlii. 8.* then those to whom he has given his name and his glory, are not another, but they are one and the same with himself. There is a sameness of godhead, therefore, that belongs to these three, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit: So that the Son and the Spirit cannot be called another god, or gods; for if they could, this would support, and not destroy, the polytheism, or multiplicity of gods, which was acknowledged and believed by the heathen nations.

And perhaps it is better to express this by a sameness of godhead, than by calling it an equality; for equality is more properly found between several distinct beings: Now wherein soever these three are distinct, it may admit of some doubt and argument, whether they are equal or no.

Therefore

Therefore we cannot fall into any mistake of doctrine, when we read in scripture, that the Father, the Son, and Spirit are one, if we suppose it to signify, or at least to include, they are one in divine nature, or godhead; they are properly one and the same God; as when *Christ* expresses himself thus: *John* x. 30. "I and my Father are one;" and when the apostle *John*, speaking of the holy trinity, saith, *1 John* v. 7. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the holy Ghost: And these three are one."

Whatsoever other sense may possibly be put on the first of these texts, "I and my Father are one," since *Christ* had not in that day so fully revealed his own godhead; yet it is evident, that this last expression of the three that bear record in heaven, cannot signify these three are one in their testimony; or, one in design and agreement, as some would have it: Because when the apostle, in the following verse, speaks of the agreement of the three witnesses on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; he asserts expressly these three, *ἐκ τῶν τριῶν* agree in one thing. But in this verse he says concerning the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, they are one, *ὁ θεὸς*, which must mean, that the three witnesses in heaven have some superior, and more intimate union or oneness, than the three witnesses on earth pretended to: And what can this more justly be applied to, than a oneness in the divine nature?

This last text hath been the subject of many cavils and disputes, whether it were written originally by the apostle, or whether it were not foisted into the scripture in some later ages; but upon the best examination we can make, I think there are good reasons to approve it apostolical.

Now since there is but one only true and living God, these three, or each of them, may be called the only true and living God: And whosoever any such expression is found in scripture, attributing the only true godhead to one of these, it is not to be supposed that it excludes the other two from communion in the only true godhead; but rather to shew that there is no other true godhead, but what belongs to these.

In this sense we must understand the following texts, where the one God is mentioned, if we would interpret them in a consistency with those numerous scriptures before cited, where the one true godhead is attributed to the Son and holy Spirit. *Matth.* xix. 17. "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." *Mark* xii. 32. "There is one God, and there is none other but he;" and many other places.

There are some texts wherein the Father is represented as the only true God. *John* xvii. 3. "That they might know thee, the only true God, and *Jesus Christ* whom thou hast sent." *Rom.* xvi. 7. "To God only wise, or, to the only wise God be glory, through *Jesus Christ* for ever." *1 Cor.* viii. 6. "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him." *Eph.* iv. 4, 5, 6. "There is one Spirit, one Lord, one God and Father of all, who is above all."

There are also some texts, wherein our Lord *Jesus Christ* may seem to be represented as the only true God. *Isai.* xlv. 21, 22. "There is no God else besides me, a just God, and a Saviour, there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." *Jude* verse 25. "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty." And some learned writers suppose, that whole title in the fourth verse of this epistle belongs to *Christ*, where men are said to "deny the only Lord God, and our Lord *Jesus Christ*;" and they translate it thus agreeably enough to the greek, "our only master, God, and Lord, *Jesus Christ*." *Τὸν μόνον Δεσπότην, Θεόν, καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν, Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν.* Especially when

St. Peter's



St. Peter's second epistle, of which St. Jude's epistle is but a sort of epitome, applies the same word *θεονομία* to Christ, 2 Pet. ii. 1.

Now in any of these scriptures, we are not to imagine that either the Father or the Son are excluded, or shut out from true godhead; but that in some of them the only true godhead is represented in the person of the Father; in the others, the same godhead is represented in the person of the Son, for this only true godhead subsists and acts in three different persons; as we shall see in the following propositions\*.

## P R O P O S I T I O N XII.

*Though the Father, Son and Spirit are but one God, yet there are such different properties, actions, characters, and circumstances ascribed to these three, as are usually ascribed to three distinct persons amongst men.*

**T**O make this proposition evident, I shall do two things. First, I will attempt to prove that they have personal actions and characters ascribed to them in scripture: And then secondly, shew that these actions require distinct persons.

First, "The sacred three have personal actions and characters ascribed to them."

That God the Father is a person all parties easily allow. The actions of creating, and governing all things, purposing ends and using means, and disposing the creatures according to the rules of his wisdom, justice and grace, are abundant evidences of his personality, and the scripture is full of them.

The Son of God, even before he came into this world, did converse with the antient patriarchs, was sent of God as the angel of his presence, to lead the *Israelites* in the wilderness, to encourage *Joshua* as captain of *Jehovah's* host, and then to take flesh upon him of the virgin *Mary*; all which are personal actions.

The holy Spirit did lead *Israel* through the desert, did inspire the prophets, and speak by them, did guide and influence our Lord *Jesus Christ*, did work miracles by the apostles, &c. And all these are personal actions.

Now lest any opposer should say, "All these several actions are performed by one single person, even the great God himself, under mere different names or appearances, and not by three distinct personal agents, I shall therefore prove,"

In

\* Here it may not be amiss to mention that which some divines have laid a great stress upon, to prove the doctrine of the trinity, viz. That God the Father, when he was about to create man, speaks thus; *Gen. i. 26.* "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;" consulting, as it were, with the Son and Spirit. This seems very probable: And perhaps it may be upon this account, that the *hebrew* word is used in the plural number in the following texts. *Eccles. xii. 1.* "Remember thy creators in the day of thy youth." *Psal. cxlix. 2.* "Let *Israel* rejoice in his makers." *Job. xxxv. 10.* "None saith, where is God my makers?" *Isai. liv. 5.* "Thy makers is thy husbands." Though other critics conceive these plural words to be mere expressions of eminence concerning God in the *hebrew* language, as *Abraham* is called "masters," and *Pharaoh*, "Lords," *Gen. xxiv. 9.* and *xl. 1.* And as the *hebrew* word for God is *אלהים Elohim*, which signifies Gods, and is used for a false god or an angel, as well as for the true God.

There are also some other expressions in scripture, where the Father, Son and Spirit seem as plainly to be denoted, *Gen. iii. 22.* "The Lord God said, behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." And *Isai. vi. 8.* When the Father, Son and Spirit are represented in vision, the prophet "heard the voice of the Lord saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" That is, I as one God, and us as three persons.

Since this was in the press, there has appeared a small discourse called "The trinity of the bible," wherein the argument arising from these *hebrew* plurals, and from the name *Elohim* is shewn in it's fullest force, and pushed to the utmost; and that with great probability, if the author had but answered the objections, he himself has raised in the margin, page 9 and 10. to the fuller satisfaction of his readers.

In the second place, That "actions which require distinct persons, are ascribed to the sacred three in scripture."

Now those are certainly such distinct personal actions and characters, as require three distinct personal agents, which cannot be ascribed or attributed to each other. And there are such different and distinct personal characters and actions ascribed to each of these three in the word of God, as cannot possibly be ascribed to either of the other two. There are such things attributed to the Father, which cannot be attributed to the Son; or the holy Spirit: And again, there are such things attributed to the Son, as cannot belong to the Father, nor the Spirit: And such things are attributed to the Spirit, which cannot be ascribed either to the Father, or the Son: Of which I shall produce a few instances.

The Father is said to generate, or beget the Son. *Psal. ii. 7.* "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Which is applied to *Christ, Heb. i. 5.* and chapter v. 5. Now this paternal act, whatsoever it mean, yet it cannot be attributed either to the Son or the Spirit.

The Son is called the "only begotten of the Father" *John i. 14, 18.* Which filial character cannot be ascribed to the Spirit, or the Father.

The Spirit is said to be given by the Father to the Son, *John iii. 34.* "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." And *Isai. lxi. 1.* "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me;" which is applied to *Christ, Luke iv. 18.* But what is said here of the Spirit, cannot be attributed to the Father, nor the Son.

"The Father sent the Son into the world to take flesh upon him, and to be born, or made of a woman," *John vi. 38, 39, 40, 57. Gal. iv. 4.* But neither the Father, nor the Spirit, are ever said to be sent to take upon them our nature, or the likeness of sinful flesh, as is expressed concerning the Son, *Rom. viii. 3.*

The holy Spirit is said to be sent from the Father, by our Lord *Jesus Christ* unto the disciples, *John xv. 26.* "When the comforter is come, whom I will send to you from the Father." And *Acts ii. 33.* "The Son having received of the Father the promise of the holy Ghost, he hath shed him forth in his various gifts upon the apostles."

The diversity of characters and offices which are sustained, and fulfilled by the Father, Son and Spirit, in order to the salvation of sinners, are so many distinct personal titles, properties, and actions attributed to them, whereby they are plainly distinguished from one another, as three personal agents.

The Father sustains the character of the supreme Lord, and governor of all things, in the oeconomy of our salvation. He is represented in scripture as maintaining the rights of godhead, and demanding satisfaction for the affronts that are done thereto by our sins: He purposes and appoints the scheme of our salvation in himself, *Eph. i. 9.* He sends his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, to make satisfaction to his injured authority, and to the offended dignity of godhead.

The Son took flesh and blood, to do the will of the Father. *Heb. x. 5, 7.* "A body hast thou prepared me: And lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God." It is the Son who dies to make atonement for sin, who rises again, and ascends to heaven as our high priest, there to intercede for us; and is exalted by the Father to the kingdom, in order to govern the world and the church.

The holy Spirit, in the sacred oeconomy of our salvation, is sent from the Father by the Son, to lead sinners into the knowledge of the truth, to change their natures,



to sanctify or make them holy, to comfort and conduct them to glory, as well as to work miracles in the world, for the confirmation of this gospel.

Now all these are so many several offices, characters and actions, which cannot be promiscuously applied to one another, in the same manner as they are attributed distinctly to each of the sacred three in scripture; and therefore they must be accounted distinct personal actions, &c.

I know not how it is possible for any one to read these following texts of scripture, wherein all the blessed three are mentioned together, without supposing them to be three distinct personal agents.

*Isai. xlii. 1.* Where God the Father says, "Behold my servant whom I uphold, I will put my Spirit upon him."

*Isai. lxi. 1.* Where the Son of God in prophecy says, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me."

*Luke iii. 22.* "And the holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, like a dove upon him, that is *Christ*, and a voice came from heaven, which said, thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well-pleased." Here are the three persons of the blessed trinity, manifesting themselves in a sensible manner at the baptism of *Christ*. The Son like a man, the holy Spirit as a dove, and the Father speaking from heaven.

*Matth xxviii. 19.* "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost."

*John xiv. 16, 17.* "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, even the Spirit of truth."

*John xiv. 26.* "The comforter which is the holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, and he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." The little word *he* in the greek is *ἐκεῖνος*, which is always used for a person.

*John xv. 26.* "I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me." Where this personal word *ἐκεῖνος* is again used.

*Rom. viii. 11.* "The Spirit of him, that is, the Father, who raised up *Jesus* from the dead."

*Rom. xv. 30.* "I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord *Jesus Christ*'s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me, in your prayers to God for me."

*2 Cor. xiii. 14.* "The grace of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, and the love of God, and the communion of the holy Ghost, be with you all, amen."

*Eph. ii. 18.* "Through him, that is, *Christ*, we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father."

*Ephes. iv. 4, 5, 6.* "There is one Spirit, one Lord, one God and Father of all."

*1 Pet. i. 2.* "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of *Jesus Christ*."

*Jude verses 20, 21.* "Praying in the holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord *Jesus Christ* unto eternal life."

I think the plain and express scripture contained in these citations, sufficiently distinguishes three personal agents, without any further comment upon them. A *turk*, or an *indian*, that reads them without any prepossession, would certainly understand most of them so.

## P R O P O S I T I O N XIII.

*Therefore it has been the custom of the christian church in almost all ages, to use the word PERSON, in order to describe these three distinctions of Father, Son, and Spirit; and to call them three distinct persons.*

THE word person signifies, in the common language of mankind, one single intelligent voluntary agent, or a principle of action that has understanding and will. So three men, or three angels, are properly called three distinct persons; and the Father, the Son and the Spirit, who are all one God, yet having three such distinct sort of actions and characters attributed to them, as may properly be ascribed to three distinct intelligent agents, we make no scruple to call them three persons. For it is sufficiently evident, that three mere names, three attributes, three modes or manners of being, three relations, or three sorts of conception of one and the same single or undivided being, are not sufficient to sustain the three different offices, or to perform the three different sort of actions, which are attributed to Father, Son, and Spirit: Nor can we account for them, without supposing three distinct intelligent agents.

It might be also mentioned to confirm this proposition, that the scripture itself uses the word person, in one or more places, to distinguish the Father from the Son. *Heb. i. 3.* *Christ* is called "the express image of his Father's person." And though the greek word "hypostasis," which we well render person, sometimes signifies substance, as it is translated *Heb. xi. 1.* yet in that very place the word seems to intimate a distinction from the Father, strong enough to answer the word person in our language. Again in *2 Cor. iv. 6.* "The knowledge of the glory of God shines forth in the person of *Jesus Christ*;" which perhaps is a better translation of the greek word *πρόσωπον* "prosopon," than when we render it the face of *Christ*.

Though the word person be fitly used and applied in this case, yet we generally suppose it is not to be taken exactly in the same sense, as when we apply the word to three men, or three angels, and call them three distinct persons; for they have not such real communion in one nature, as these three sacred persons have in one godhead.

But since these things are so difficult to determine, I will never contend with my brother, or fellow-christian, who scruples to use the word person in this doctrine; provided he will but allow such a distinction between the sacred three, as is sufficient to support their distinct characters and offices assigned to them in scripture: And this is all that I mean by using this word.

Yet since the word person is the best word that we know, and comes nearest to the ideas or conceptions, which the scripture seems to give us of the distinction between Father, Son, and Spirit; I use it still with great freedom and satisfaction, in a sense near akin to the common sense of the word.

## A moral ARGUMENT.

As I have used one moral argument at the end of the tenth proposition, to prove the true and proper deity of Father, Son, and Spirit; so I shall propose another of



the same kind under this proposition, to confirm both the doctrine of their deity, and distinct personality together : And it is this.

This great article of belief, that "Father, Son, and Spirit are three persons, and yet one God," is so sublime in it's nature, so impossible to be found out by human reason, if it had not been revealed ; it carries in it such an appearance of contradiction at first, it is so exceeding hard to explain and reconcile, even when it is well considered by us ; and it is so shocking and offensive in the most usual explanations of it to the great pretenders to reason, that it can hardly be supposed how it should enter into the minds of men at first ; and how it should have been so generally believed in the christian church in almost all ages of christianity, if it had not been very plainly revealed, and strongly confirmed in scripture ; so that those honest and conscientious men could not wink against the light and strength of evidence, nor turn the scripture to any other sense.

It is not to be imagined that such a doctrine of the trinity, which has no countenance from the light of nature, nor any manner of allurements in it to gratify the lusts or fancies of men, nor flatter the pride of human reason, should ever have come, without most forcible evidence, into the heads of such multitudes of great and wise men, who thought and searched with freedom for themselves, and who read the bible with a honest enquiry after truth ; I say, it is not to be imagined that such a strange article should ever have been believed by these men, and brought into the church, or subsisted there so many hundred years, and especially since the reformation, were it not for the plain, strong, over-bearing light, and resistless proofs of it that are found in the word of God. \* Several remarks with which the reverend ministers of *London* have prefaced their late "harmony of confessions" on this article, are well worth notice here, see pages 41—47.

#### P R O P O S I T I O N XIV.

*Though the sacred three are evidently and plainly discovered in scripture, to be one and the same God, and three distinct personal agents or persons, yet the scripture bath not in plain and evident language explained, and precisely determined the particular way and manner, how these three persons are one God, or how this one godhead is in three persons.*

THE truth of this doctrine, that "there are three divine persons and one God," is abundantly more evident in the scripture, than any particular explanation of this sacred doctrine : And though learned men have endeavoured to explain the trinity by reason, to determine the "modus" or manner how three are one, and one three, to defend their schemes by human arguments, and to illustrate them by several similitudes, yet these illustrations, these explainings and reasonings, with the human terms that belong to them, are not to be esteemed, as they have too often been,

\* How the particular explanations of this doctrine came to be so various, both in the writings of the primitive and modern christians, will be easily accounted for in the following proposition, viz. "because scripture has not clearly explained it." And if the bulk of the christian world, has at any time for some ages together followed one and the same scheme of explication, it is because they found undeniably the plain doctrine of three persons, and one God revealed in scripture, and they knew no other way to give a tolerable explication of it all that time.

been, the matter of divine revelation, any farther than they are by evident and irresistible consequence drawn from the word of God.

Among these explications, some of them seem to me to be evidently false and insufficient.

Such is the *arian* scheme, which supposes the Father only to be the true God, and that the two other persons have not true, proper and eternal godhead belonging to them: And such is the *sabellian* scheme, which supposes the Father, Son, and Spirit, not to be distinct persons, but mere different names, modes, and appearances of the one God. One of these denies the true godhead, the other the personality.

Other schemes have been multiplied in the christian world, which do indeed secure and maintain the substance of the scriptural doctrine of the trinity, as the *athanasian*, the scholastic scheme, &c. Yet they have such various difficulties attending them, that I do not think it necessary to trouble the private christian with a long detail of them here.

And indeed to speak my own sentiment freely, I must say, that upon a fresh and unbiassed search of matters, a mature and deliberate review of the scriptural doctrine of the trinity, as I find it in the bible, and a new survey of the several schemes found out to explain it, I am more firmly established than ever in this doctrine, that Father, Son, and Spirit, are the one true God, yet subsisting in three persons: But as to the various schemes of explication, there is not any of them can prevail upon me any farther now, than to receive them as possible or probable explications of a very deep and difficult doctrine of scripture.

But suppose the professors of any of the best of these schemes, should find sufficient arguments from the word of God, to demonstrate the truth of their own scheme, and could prove it beyond all contradiction, that their particular explication of the trinity, is the very doctrine that is revealed in the holy scripture, yet I am sure they can never prove that it is clearly and plainly revealed there: But it still requires much skill and labour of reasoning to draw it out from scripture, and set it in an evident light.

#### P R O P O S I T I O N XV.

*Thence I infer, that it can never be necessary to salvation, to know the precise way and manner how one godhead subsists in three personal agents, or how these three persons are one God.*

THE reasons of this proposition are very evident.

1. Though the doctrine of the trinity seem to be a fundamental article of christianity, yet the particular explication of this sacred doctrine, as we have hinted before, cannot be a fundamental, because "it is not any where revealed to us in scripture, in so plain and manifest language, as the fundamental articles of our religion are and must be." For the scriptures were written to make the meanest of men wise to salvation; even the babes in *Christ*, and the weak, and the unlearned, the "base and the foolish things of this world, whom God hath chosen and called," 1 Cor. i. 27. Now that it is not so plainly revealed, appears, because learned and pious men, who have made a honest search after truth, derive their several explications of this doctrine by long and difficult trains of reasoning, and are often ready to



to commit mistakes, and to run counter to the most established principles of natural reason, and sometimes contradict themselves too in this work.

I will not deny but there may be several truths both of natural and revealed religion, that are merely drawn by reasoning and consequence, which may yet be necessary to salvation: But then these are such as are open and obvious to the first view of reason, and such as lie very near the surface of scripture, if I may so express it, and may be inferred with the greatest ease by men of the lowest rank of understanding. Such easy and obvious consequences may contain fundamental doctrines. But whatsoever lies hidden deep in the sacred mines of the word of God, and must be digged thence with much learning and study, much toil and labour of reasoning, and can be drawn out only by long chains of laborious argument, these things can never be designed of God for the fundamental articles of our religion, nor ought they to be esteemed or imposed as such by weak and fallible men.

2. A second reason I have to persuade me, that no particular explication of the trinity, and the "modus" of it is necessary and fundamental, is this; that there have been many, and very different explications of this doctrine embraced by some persons of most exemplary piety: Such persons as have most firmly believed the general doctrine itself, and such, concerning whom I could even venture to say, "May my soul be where their's is in the other world!"

Some have asserted one substance, one conscious mind, inconceivably and necessarily distinguished into three personal agents. Others have supposed, three distinct substances or minds, and yet all intimately, and essentially, and necessarily united in one godhead.

Some have maintained the son-ship of *Christ*, and procession of the Spirit, to be essentially and eternally necessary to the divine nature. Others would account for the generation, and procession, and every thing that looks like derivation, some other way, rather than let it belong to godhead.

And yet the writings and conversation of all of them, have been famous for a favour of piety; they have all paid divine honours to Father, Son and Spirit, and lived and died to the glory of God their Saviour: Some of them were certainly mistaken on earth, in their particular explications of this mystery, because they differed so widely; and they were taken to heaven before they could agree in this point of controversy; thence it plainly follows, that an agreement and certainty in this point is not necessary in our way to heaven.

3. Another argument I would use to prove, that the particular explications of this doctrine of the trinity, cannot be necessary to salvation, is this, that the "duties which we are obliged to pay to the Father, Son and Spirit, in order to our own salvation, do not depend upon any particular modes of explication," in what manner they are one, and in what manner they are three; but upon their divine al sufficiency to fulfil and sustain their several offices and characters, that are attributed to them in the word of God. But this I shall enlarge upon more in some following propositions.

I shall conclude this head, with calling in the testimony of some authors to support this proposition, whose zeal for the sacred doctrine of the trinity, can never be called in question.

The first, is the reverend, learned and pious doctor *Owen*, to whose name and memory I pay as great veneration as to most of the writers of the last age. In his little treatise of the "doctrine of the trinity," third edition, 8vo. page 18. he hath these words. "The sum of this revelation in this matter, is, that God is one; that this  
one

one God is Father, Son and holy Ghost; that the Father is the Father of the Son; and the Son the Son of the Father; and the holy Ghost the Spirit of the Father, and the Son; and that in respect of this their mutual relation, they are distinct from each other. This is the substance of the doctrine of the trinity, as to the first direct concernment of faith therein." And a little after, "This is the whole of faith's concernment in this matter, as it respects the direct revelation of God made by himself in the scripture, and the first proper general end thereof. Let this be clearly confirmed by direct and positive divine testimonies containing the declaration and revelation of God, concerning himself, and faith is secured as to all it's concerns. For it hath both it's proper formal object, and is sufficiently enabled to be directive of divine worship and obedience. The explication of this doctrine unto edification, suitable unto the revelation mentioned, is of another consideration."

And page 75. when he has finished his proofs of the godhead and personality of the sacred three, he sums up all in these words. Viz. "Our conclusion from the whole is; that there is nothing more fully expressed in the scripture, than this sacred truth is; that there is one God, Father, Son, and holy Ghost; which are divine, distinct, intelligent, voluntary, omnipotent principles of operation, and working, which whosoever thinks himself obliged to believe the scripture, must believe; and concerning others in this discourse, we are not solicitous. This is that which was first proposed; namely, to manifest what is expressly revealed in the scripture, concerning God the Father, Son, and holy Ghost; so as that we may duly believe in him, yield obedience unto him, enjoy communion with him, walk in his love and fear, and so come at length to be blessed with him for evermore. Nor doth faith for it's security, establishment and direction, absolutely stand in need of any farther exposition or explanation of these things."

And after the author has given a brief explication of essence, substance, unity, distinction, personality, &c. in a few pages, he adds page 79. "Nor are those brief explications themselves before-mentioned, so proposed as to be placed immediately in the same rank and order with the original revelations before insisted on, but only are pressed as proper expressions of what is revealed, to increase our light, and further our edification."

The next authors I shall cite on this subject, are the "four *London* ministers, who stated and defended the doctrine of the blessed trinity," in a book lately published by their concurrent labours, and who are persons of undoubted piety and zeal for the christian faith.

In page 18. their words are these. "Section 6. We do not ourselves pretend to say, how these three are distinguished from each other: That we leave to those, who are bold enough to speak, even upon such a point as this, without, if not against what the scriptures themselves any where have said: We only say, that there they are distinguished.

"Section 7. We farther add, that though these three are in the scriptures distinguished from, and therefore not to be confounded with each other; yet we have learned nothing there, either of their being compounded, or divided: Nor do we therefore undertake to shew explicitly, and in particulars, how they are three; nor, how, though three, yet they are one. What we assert again is only, that they are three, some way or other; and though in some respect three, yet but one God.

"Section 8. "Nay, though these three are in the holy scriptures spoken of under the names of Father, Son, and holy Ghost; and as begetting, begotten, and proceeding: Yet still we leave it to those who are wiser, or at least more daring and  
bold.



bold than we, to say that this does, and to shew afterward how it does relate to the divine essence. \* For we have no notion of a greater or lesser in the godhead, do think, that wherever that does belong, it must equally belong: And consequently, that it is not any one of the three, that is, exclusive of the others; but that these three are the one supreme God.

"Section 9. Let it be added, before we produce our proofs, that these three are not merely three names: And that these names do not every where in scripture, if they do any where, bear one and the same meaning.

"Section 10. We shall now only venture to say once more, that whatever the distinction is between these sacred three, or wherein soever it does consist; as on one part it does not destroy the unity of the divine nature, so on the other, it is such, so real and so great, as is just and sufficient ground to support whatever is distinctly said of the one or the other of them in the holy scriptures. So as that the person of the Father is not the Son; nor the Son, the Father; nor either of these the holy Ghost. Thus far the serious plain christian, may venture into this awful mystery of the blessed trinity."

But as these reverend authors, in the following words, do not by any means advise the unlearned and private christian to search farther, so I cannot see any great necessity that he should.

#### P R O P O S I T I O N XVI.

*Yet it is our duty to believe the general doctrine of the trinity, viz. that these three personal agents, Father, Son, and Spirit, have real communion in one godhead, although we cannot find out the precise way and manner of explaining it.*

I Would have it observed here, that I do not absolutely determine the sacred doctrine of the trinity to be incapable of all explication: For though many past attempts may have been weak and insufficient, yet it does not follow that all future attempts shall be so too. Who can assure us that God will never give to any favourite christian the happy turn of thought, that may lead him, as by an easy clew, into the knowledge of this mystery? *Daniel* foretels, that towards the latter end of the world, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be encreased," *Dan. xii. 4.* By a mutual commerce of the sentiments of men of learning and piety, and by the assistance of the divine Spirit, there may be some glorious spark of light cast upon this obscure article of faith, which former ages despaired of: Even as the great Sir *Isaac Newton* in our age has traced the nature, bulk, and motions of the heavenly bodies, beyond what all former ages knew, or what men on earth could ever have hoped for.

But

\* Though these authors agree entirely with doctor *Owen*, in not making the knowledge of any particular explication of the doctrine of the trinity necessary to salvation, yet they differ in this; that doctor *Owen* in several parts of his treatise, supposes the vulgar explication of Father, Son and Spirit as three eternal, necessary, personal, differences in the very essence of God, to be a certain and unavoidable consequence of the doctrine itself: But the writer of these sections is not certain, that these differences of Father, Son, Spirit, generation, procession, &c. do relate to the divine essence itself; and in this point I ask leave to differ from that great man doctor *Owen*; and join with these later writers; for, in maturer years, I am not ashamed to profess my ignorance in a subject so sublime, and to abate some degrees of my younger confidence as to the modes of explaining this mystery.

But suppose this sacred doctrine, as to the manner of it, could never be explained by us, or to us in this present mortal state, yet all the cavils of our adversaries hitherto have never been able to prove, that this doctrine itself, free from all human additions and incumbrances, is really impossible; and therefore we are bound to believe this article, so far as God has plainly and evidently revealed it, though it should be to us inexplicable.

There is, I confess, a certain pride in the mind of man, that is ready to resist divine truth, if it does not lie level to our understandings, submit to our reasonings, and come within the compass of our clear and comprehensive ideas. It was this criminal pride, that has tempted some of the *socinian* writers to say, that if the doctrines of the divinity and satisfaction of *Christ* were never so plainly expressed in scripture, yet they would not assent to them in the literal sense, because they could not understand them, or because, according to the judgment of their reason, it could not be approved. Therefore they are wont to twist and turn the plain expressions of scripture by the arts of criticism and metaphor, to signify something else. *Socinus* himself says, that in such cases, "any the greatest force is to be used with words rather than take them in the obvious sense." "Epistola secunda ad Balcerim."

But surely it must be acknowledged that in the nature, works and ways of God, there are many things which are above the reach of our present understandings; many things which are true, and yet we know not how to reconcile them to one another. And whatsoever doctrines of this kind God shall plainly reveal to us in his word, we are bound under the penalty of his high displeasure, to receive and believe, though we cannot reconcile them.

But some will object and say, "Must we believe things that are inconsistent and assent to contradictions?"

Answer. There is a great deal of difference between a seeming and a real contradiction. If we can suppose, that it could ever have been said in scripture, that three Gods are one God, or three persons are one person, there had been reason indeed to disbelieve it in the literal sense, and to have found out some more consistent interpretation of it, according to the rules of speech: For neither reason or religion can require us to believe plain inconsistencies.

But when we assert that Father, Son and holy Spirit, are three distinct agents in our salvation, such as we usually call persons; and when we again assert that the Father is God, the Son is God, the Spirit is God, and yet that there are not three Gods, but one God; there is no real contradiction in all these, though we could not find the plain, and certain way to reconcile them: And since these propositions are of such importance in our religion, since the sense of them is evidently contained in scripture, though not the express words; since they seem to lie plain and open to the view of any common reader, that has never been prepossessed with other notions, I think we may venture to say, God requires the belief of them where the bible is known and read.

Here some persons will be ready to say, "We cannot find these doctrines in the bible, we cannot see them written there with sufficient evidence, and therefore we believe them not; nor can we be required to believe what we cannot see revealed."

But these objectors would do well to ask themselves solemnly, as in the sight of God, "Whether or no they should not think them plainly and sufficiently revealed, if they could but reconcile them by reason to their own satisfaction?" If so, then it is plain, that the impediment of belief does not lie in the want of evidence, but in faulty prejudices and reluctance of the mind, because of the inability of our reason, to



comprehend what is revealed. We are not willing to see these truths, because difficulty and mystery attend them; and it is exceeding natural and easy to wink a little, when we are not willing to see.

Now if these secret prejudices are indulged, if we will not submit to receive these sacred truths, merely because we cannot comprehend and reconcile them, we have some ground to suspect ourselves guilty of that inward pride, and obstinacy of mind, which is highly criminal in the sight of God. And whether the great God will not terribly resent in the other world, these faulty prejudices, this haughtiness of the mind, this unbelief of truths so plainly revealed, is a thought that should make us tremble, and render us exceeding cautious, and meek, and humble in all our conduct about these important doctrines of religion.

I must confess for myself with honest freedom, that in my diligent search after truth in the bible, I would have been glad to have taken up with some ideas of the trinity, that might have been less subject to the cavils of human reason, and more easily comprehended and reconciled, if the plain and obvious sense of scripture in a multitude of places, had not constrained my faith to submit to divine revelation, and to acquiesce in this great truth, that "Father, Son, and Spirit, are three persons, and yet but one God."

I might here add another reason also, why we ought to believe, that these three persons have some real and intimate communion in the godhead, viz. because the characters and offices they sustain in the matter of our salvation, and the duties which we owe them, do in my judgement require the perfections of a God, that they may be fit to fulfil those offices, and to receive the homage of those duties. There appears to be a necessity of omnipotence and omniscience, and of other divine attributes, to execute those glorious works, which are assigned to the Son, and the holy Spirit, in the word of God, as well as those which are ascribed to the Father. Nor do I know how we can justly pay them honours answerable to these characters, if we believe them to be mere creatures.

#### P R O P O S I T I O N XVII.

*And wheresoever we meet with any thing in scripture, that is incommunicably divine, ascribed to either of these three persons, we may venture to take it in the plain and obvious sense of the words, since we believe the true and eternal godhead to belong to them all.*

**I**T has been hinted before, that there is a great deal of reason to suppose, that the *arians* and the *socinians*, and all others who deny the proper godhead of the Son and Spirit, are guilty of a gross mistake; because there are so many places of scripture which they are forced to handle with much art and criticism, and to twist, and to strain, and to pervert them from their plain and native sense, before they can make them consist with the *arian* or *socinian* doctrines. But the christian who believes, that the Son and Spirit have proper communion in the godhead, reads with pleasure all those expressions of scripture, which ascribe divine titles and dignity both to the Spirit, and the Son, as well as the Father, and understands, and believes them in the plain sense of the words, with much satisfaction and ease, and lets his faith rest upon the express revelation of God in his word.

All that is incommunicably divine, and that is attributed to the Son or Spirit in scripture, is naturally and easily applied or imputed to the same godhead or divine nature,

nature, which belongs both to the Father, to the Son, and to the holy Spirit, or in which the Son and Spirit have communion together with the Father.

# PROPOSITION XVIII.

*Where any thing inferior to the dignity of godhead, is really and properly attributed in scripture to the person of the Son, or the holy Spirit, it may be easily imputed to some inferior nature, united to the godhead in that person, or to some inferior character or office sustained by that person.*

HERE let it be observed, that there are some inferior properties and actions in scripture ascribed to God in general, and to the person of the Father, as well as to the Son and Spirit, which are not to be taken properly, but merely in a figurative sense, such as to have eyes and ears, hands and feet, to rejoice, to grieve, to repent, &c. Which signify the pure actions of God as an infinite Spirit, expressed towards his creatures in a figurative and familiar way, and in likeness to man, that we may understand them the better. These are not the inferior expressions which I speak of. But when any thing inferior to the dignity of godhead, is in a real and proper manner attributed to the Son, or the Spirit; then it is to be explained in one of these two ways which this proposition describes.

The reason of this proposition is evident; because since the Son, and the holy Spirit, are truly and properly partakers of godhead, or the divine nature, therefore nothing that is inferior to the nature of God, can be asserted concerning them, considered absolutely and simply as partakers in the divine essence. Whatsoever therefore is properly ascribed to any of these sacred persons, that is beneath the dignity of godhead, must arise from something external to God, something that is not essential to the divine nature.

Now this something external to God, is either real or relative. If it be real, it must be some inferior nature united to the godhead. If it be relative, it must be some inferior character or office, sustained by one of the sacred persons: And upon either of these accounts, we may suppose something inferior to the supreme dignity of godhead, to be ascribed to one or more of the sacred three.

Let us enquire particularly concerning this.

There are many things inferior to the dignity of godhead, which are evidently attributed to the Son in scripture; such as these, that he was "made of a woman," *Gal. iv. 4.* That he was in the "form of a servant," *Philip. ii. 7.* That he "increased in wisdom and stature," *Luke ii. 52.* That he "knew not the day of judgment," *Mark xiii. 32.* That he was hungry and thirsty, and asleep, that he wept, that he groaned, that he was forsaken of his Father, that his soul was exceeding sorrowful, that he was crucified, and died, that he rose again, and ascended to heaven.

But all these things are easily accounted for, by the union of the godhead, to the inferior nature of man, in the person of *Jesus Christ*. For he who was born of the virgin was *Immanuel*, or God with us," *Luke i. 54.* He who was true and real God, was also true and real man, and of the "seed of *David* according to the flesh," *Rom. i. 3.* He who was God over all, blessed for ever, according to his divine nature, "came from the *jewish* fathers according to the flesh, or his human nature," *Rom. ix. 5.* He who was the true God was "manifested in the flesh," *1 Tim. iii. 16.* This is called the "incarnation of *Christ*," and the new testament is full of it.



Hence it comes to pass, that the properties and actions of one nature are ascribed sometimes to the whole person, and sometimes to the other nature. So the Son of man is said to be in heaven, *John* iii. 13. and that while the man *Jesus* was here upon earth; because, as God, he was in heaven and earth, and every where present. So the Lord of glory is said to be crucified, *1 Cor.* ii. 8. because the man *Christ Jesus* was crucified, who in his divine nature is the Lord of glory. So the church is said to be "purchased with God's own blood," *Acts* xx. 28. because the blood of the man who was also God purchased the church. So "God laid down his life for us," *1 John* iii. 16. that is, he who was God laid down his human life. This is what divines usually call a communication of properties.

If there be any thing inferior to the dignity of godhead attributed to the Son or Spirit, which cannot be imputed to some real inferior nature, united to the godhead in that person, then it arises from something relative, and it must be attributed to some inferior character or office, sustained by that person in the oeconomy of our salvation.

Now there are some things that seem inferior to the dignity of godhead, which are attributed to the Son, even before his coming in the flesh, and being born of a virgin; as, that God the Father sent his Son into the world, which seems to imply his being before. That he "came down from heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him," *John* vi. 38, 39. *Gal.* iv. 4. That he left the "glory which he had with the Father before the beginning of the world," *John* xvii. 5. That God the Father "prepared a body for him," *Heb.* x. 5. The Son came and assumed that body "to do the will of God on earth," verses 7, 9. compared with *Psal.* xl. 6, 7, 8. as he had been God's angel or messenger to the patriarchs.

Now if we can give ourselves leave to suppose, that the human soul of our Lord *Jesus Christ* had a being, and was personally united to the divine nature, long before his body was born of the virgin, even from the very foundation of the world, and that this was the angel who conversed with *Abraham*, *Moses*, *Josua*, &c. then we may most easily account for these expressions of scripture, which signify something inferior to godhead before his incarnation; and we may attribute them to the human soul of *Christ*; which, though infinitely inferior to God, yet doubtless is a spirit of a very excellent and noble nature, as being formed on purpose to be united to God, and never existed but in a personal union with God.

There is nothing in the whole word of God, that I know of, which discounts such a supposition as this; and there are a great many texts both of the old and new testament, which are with the greatest ease explained and reconciled this way, which it is very hard to account for, without admitting this opinion; nor has it the least ill aspect on any other article of our faith \*.

But

\* If any of my readers imagine, that either here, or in the end of this chapter, I have forgot the words of my title page, and have used the aid of human schemes, I intreat them to remember, that I have built nothing at all toward the proof of the trinity, upon any such supposition or scheme whatsoever; but have only proposed an illustration, a simile, a thought or notion, whereby the divine doctrine may be more easily apprehended, or whereby many texts of scripture may be more naturally explained, and more happily reconciled. Those who disapprove these hints, may entirely neglect them, and the plain scriptural doctrine of the trinity abides the same still.

I do not mention this pre existence of the human soul of *Christ* as a point of faith, which I firm'y believe, but merely as a matter of opinion not to be rashly rejected, and well worth our farther enquiry; for I have not met with any thing yet published against it, that is sufficient to forbid the proposal of it here; and perhaps I shall say much more for it, if I should live to publish some short "dissertations" that I have written relating to the "doctrine of the trinity."

But if we dare not venture our thoughts so far out of the common track, as to suppose that the human soul of *Christ* had any being, before he took flesh, then we suppose, that he existed only in his divine nature before his incarnation; and then these inferior expressions of being God's messenger or angel, of having a body prepared for him by the Father, of being sent, of coming to do the will of his Father, and of not doing his own will, &c. must be attributed to his character and office as mediator, which carries something inferior in it, and which he assumed even from the beginning of the world: So that the Son who had all power and sovereignty as God, must be said under the character of a mediator, to be the messenger, the servant of God the Father, and be sent by him to do his will.

And thus by considering our Lord *Jesus Christ*, either in his inferior nature, as having a human soul, and a human body united to godhead, or in his inferior office as being a mediator, we may explain all those texts which ascribe something to him below the majesty of godhead. And where we cannot apply it to his human nature, it must be applied to his office.

I might multiply examples out of many parts of the new testament and the old, to shew with how much ease and readiness, this doctrine will assist us to explain and reconcile many things that are said concerning *Christ*; but I chuse rather to exemplify this, in explaining those difficult expressions of our Lord *Jesus Christ* concerning himself, which are recorded in *John* v. 19—30. "Verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doth, these also doth the Son likewise. The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doth.—As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.—The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son, to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." And yet a little after, he saith again, "I can of my own self do nothing."

Here are some divine characters, which seem to be too great for any mere creature; such as, "Whatsoever things the Father doth, these also doth the Son likewise. The Father sheweth the Son all things that himself doth. The Son raiseth the dead by his word, and quickeneth whom he will; all men must honour the Son; as they honour the Father. As the Father hath life in himself, so the Son hath life in himself."

Here are also some characters, that seem much inferior to the dignity of godhead; "The Son can do nothing of himself. Judgment is committed to him by the Father. He has it given to him, to have life in himself; and authority to execute judgement is given him:" And it is repeated again, "Of himself he can do nothing," verse 30.

Now may not these scriptures admit of this exposition, imputing the inferior characters and expressions, to his inferior or human nature, thus? *Jesus* is but a man, and can do nothing of himself; but because the Man *Jesus* is the Son of man, or the appointed *Messiah*, as verse 27. therefore the Father has ordained, that he should be personally united to God, "it hath pleased the Father, that in him the fulness of godhead should dwell bodily;" thus the Son of man hath union with godhead given him: And by this means, he has it given him to have life in himself; for where godhead is, there also are the properties of godhead, one of which is, to have life in himself.



himself. By this means also the person of the Son as god-man, is said to know all things that the Father does, and doth the same things which he seeth the Father do, or performs that which the Father hath purposed. So the Son raiseth the dead, quickeneth whom he will, and executeth judgement on all mankind, and receiveth divine honours, as well as the Father: And yet he is said to have all this power and honour given him by the Father, because by the appointment of the Father, the divine nature dwells in *Jesus* the Son of man, who of himself, and in himself is but a man, and could do nothing.

The Son, as he is man, is represented here as able to do nothing of himself: The Father, though he be God, is represented as willing to do nothing of himself: Therefore the Father, whose divine nature dwells in the Son, doth all things by the Son, as his great agent and minister in the salvation of men.

Or if this interpretation does not please, we may then suppose, that the inferior characters here mentioned, are only attributed to *Christ* as mediator; and then the interpretation is this; viz. Though considered as God, he knows all things, he can do all things, and is the sovereign of life, yet considered as mediator, he is supposed to wave this sovereignty; and in this sense he may be said to receive these powers, instructions, and delegated authority from the Father, who sustains the sovereign or supreme character in the oeconomy of grace.

This shall suffice concerning the inferior actions and characters, which are ascribed to *Christ* in the scripture.

I proceed now to consider the holy Spirit.

There are also some things in scripture, which seem inferior to the dignity of godhead, that are attributed to the blessed Spirit, as that he is "sent by the Father at the Son's request," *John* xiv. 16. that "he is sent by the Son," *John* xv. 26. that "he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak," *John* xvi. 13. "That he shall receive the things of the Son, and shew them unto men," verses 14, 15. That the "holy Ghost was given to some men, by the laying on of the hands of other men," *Acts* viii. 17, 18. "That the Spirit is poured out upon men," *Acts* ii. 17, 18. That men are "baptized with the holy Ghost," *Matth.* iii. 11. "That he maketh intercession for the saints, with groanings that cannot be uttered," *Rom.* viii. 26, 27.

Now if there be no inferior nature, which belongs to the Spirit of God, to which these things may properly be ascribed, then they must be imputed to the Spirit of God, considered in the inferior character, or office of a deputy, or vicergerent, a messenger, or advocate\*, both of the Father, and of the Son: And in this sense, he who considered as true God, is one with the Father, and hath absolute sovereignty; yet considered in the gospel, as a prime minister of the Father's and Son's kingdom, is pleased to represent himself as being sent by the Father and the Son, as their chief agent, to fulfil many kind offices for us, and in us, in the oeconomy of salvation.

If I could make this proposition clearer, and give my reader an easier conception of it by any human illustrations, I would attempt it in this manner, and try to represent

\* The word *παράκλητος*, "*paracletos*," which we translate the "comforter," in the xiv. xv. and xvi. chapters of St. *John*, may be as properly rendered, the "advocate;" for that *greek* word signifies both. Now to be an advocate is the proper office of the holy Spirit, that is, to speak for God the Father, and for *Christ* in the world, since *Christ* is gone to heaven; and it is the very same word which we translate "advocate," 1 *John* ii. 2. When it is applied to *Christ* as speaking for us in heaven.

present this divine mystery of three persons, with three distinct characters, yet but one God.

Suppose a king should send an ambassador extraordinary to a foreign country, and at his removal should appoint a resident to stay behind him in that country; and suppose the soul of the king himself could be so united also to the body, or person, both of the ambassador and the resident, as to animate, actuate and move them, and become, as it were, one person with each of them: Then the soul of the king himself might be said to sustain both his own character as king, and the inferior characters both of the ambassador and the resident, and fulfil all those offices under a distinct sort of personality.

Thus we may apprehend, how God the Father, the king of heaven, sent down his Son, a distinct person, in whom the same godhead dwells, as an ambassador extraordinary to earth; and the holy Spirit a distinct person also, who hath the same godhead, was left here as a resident. And thus this eternal God, being the same in the Father, Son and Spirit, sustains the superior character of a sovereign king, in the person of the Father, and may be said also to sustain these inferior characters of an ambassador, and a resident, and to fulfil these offices in the persons of the Son and Spirit.

I confess these "simile's" borrowed from earthly things, are very imperfect, and insufficient to represent things divine and heavenly; but perhaps they may serve to strike some little light upon this sacred mystery.

#### P R O P O S I T I O N    X I X .

*Nor do these inferior natures, characters or agencies, at all hinder our firm belief of the godhead of these three persons, which is so plainly expressed in scripture, nor should it abate or diminish our sacred regards to them.*

**W**hatsoever inferior nature may be united to the godhead in any of the divine persons, or whatsoever inferior characters or offices they may sustain in the matters of our salvation, these do not at all take away, or diminish the nature or dignity of the godhead, subsisting in that person. The divine nature must still maintain it's own honour and eternal dignity; for God must be God for ever, and cannot divest himself of his own real and essential glories, whatsoever condescending forms and offices he may assume, in order to fulfil his wonderful counsels, and designs of power or love, of creation or providence, or the greater work of redemption.

To make this very plain, I would express myself here thus in imitation of doctor Owen speaking of *Christ*. Each nature united in the person of *Christ*, is entire, and preserves to itself it's own natural properties. For he is no less true and perfect God, for being united to man; nor is he less a true, perfect man, consisting of soul and body, by being united to God. His divine nature still continues omniscient, omnipotent, infinite, &c. His human nature finite, or limited, in knowledge and power, and was, before it's glorification, subject to all infirmities of life, and death, to which the same nature in others absolutely considered, is obnoxious.

In each of these natures, he acts suitably to the essential properties and principles of that nature. As God, he made all things, upholds all things by the word of his power, fills heaven and earth, &c. As man, he lived, hungered, suffered, died, rose,



rose, ascended into heaven. Yet by reason of the union of both these natures in the same person, sometimes the person *Christ* may be said to do all these things; and sometimes the actions of one nature are attributed to the other; so God is said to lay down his life for us, &c. as I have shewn before.

So in the holy Spirit, the dignity of divine nature is preserved entire; and thus it acts like itself, with sovereign authority and power in many places of scripture; though in other places the person of the Spirit is represented as acting in a way of deputation, and, as it were, by commission received from the Father or the Son.

Still we must remember, that under whatsoever inferior characters or offices the Son or Spirit are represented in scripture, yet their communion in and with the divine nature ceases not, true godhead belongs to them still. And wheresoever true godhead is, there are all the attributes, honours, and prerogatives of godhead, whatsoever other or lower characters that person may also assume and sustain.

### P R O P O S I T I O N XX.

*We are bound therefore to pay divine honours to each of the sacred three, viz. the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit, according to their distinct characters and offices assigned them in scripture.*

**T**Hough each person of the blessed trinity ought to have divine honours paid to him, yet these honours are generally distinguished, and expressed in such a manner, as is suited to their distinct personal characters, and operations, as they are revealed to us in the word of God, which is the only rule of our duty and worship.

Let it always be observed and kept in mind, that the only ground and foundation, and formal reason of the divine worship and honours, that are paid to each of the sacred three, is their godhead, or communion in the divine nature; yet the special forms of the worship and honour which is paid them, arise chiefly from those special offices and characters, which the scripture assigns to them.

Now in order to shew clearly, what are their distinct honours, together with the reasons of them, let us consider, in what manner the scripture represents their distinct characters and offices.

#### First, Of the FATHER.

God the Father, is represented in scripture generally as the first or supreme agent, but as acting by his word or Son, and through his Spirit, and that sometimes in the works of creation and providence, as well as in the works of redemption and salvation.

In "creation," this is sufficiently evident. *Psal. xxxiii. 6.* "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath, [or Spirit,] of his mouth."

*Eph. iii. 9.* "God who created all things by *Jesus Christ*."

*Heb. i. 2.* "By whom, [that is, his Son,] he made the worlds."

The Spirit also hath his share of agency herein. Thus

*Job. xxvi. 13.* "By his Spirit he garnished the heavens;" and his "Spirit moved on the face of the waters," *Gen. i. 2.*

And

And it is very natural to suppose that, since God the Father created all things by his Son, and his holy Spirit; therefore he says, *Gen. i. 26.* "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," consulting, as it were, with his Son, or with his Son and Spirit about the creation of man.

This is evident also in the administrations of "providence."

*Isai. ix. 6.* "To us a Son is born, that is, *Christ*, the government shall be upon his shoulder."

*Psal. cx. 5.* "The Lord at thy right hand, shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath," that is, *Christ* exalted to the right hand of God.

*Matt. xxviii. 18.* "*Jesus* spake to them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven, and in earth."

*John v. 22.* "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son."

It is also by the Spirit, that the Father manages his providential kingdom.

*Psal. civ. 36.* When his creatures faint and die, God "sendeth forth his Spirit, and they are created, and thus he renews the face of the earth," that is, he continues a succession of creatures, by the agency of his Spirit, in the course of his providence.

*Isai. xxxiv. 17.* When God sends desolation, and wild beasts into *Babylon*, it is expressed, "his Spirit hath gathered them."

And that he acts thus by his Son, through his Spirit, in the work of our salvation, is much more frequently expressed in scripture. I shall mention but a few texts, and only such, where both the Son and Spirit are mentioned in the same place.

*1 Pet. i. 2.* "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience; and the sprinkling of the blood of *Jesus Christ*."

*2 Cor. i. 21, 22.* "He which establisheth us with you, in *Christ*, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

*Rom. v. 1, 5.* "We have peace with God, through our Lord *Jesus Christ*.—The Love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the holy Ghost which is given to us"

*1 Cor. vi. 11.* "Washed, justified, sanctified in the name of the Lord *Jesus*, and by the Spirit of our God."

*John xiv. 16, 17.* *Christ* saith, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, even the Spirit of truth."

*Acts ii. 33.* "*Jesus* being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the holy Ghost, hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

*Gal. iv. 4, 5, 6.* "God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying *Abba*, Father."

*2 Cor. v. 18.* "All things are of God, that is, the Father, who hath reconciled us to himself by *Jesus Christ*." Verse 5. "He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, that is, fitted us for heaven, is God, who hath also given us the earnest of the Spirit."

And in this sense the evangelical benediction or blessing is thus expressed, "The grace of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and the love of God, and the communion of the holy



Ghost, be with you all. Amen." 2 Cor. xiii. 14. And in this sense it is, that we are "baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost," *Matth.* xxviii. 19. For though I believe there may be a good consequential argument drawn from both these scriptures, to prove that the Son and the Spirit have real communion in the godhead, as well as the Father; yet the first and direct design, is to shew, that each of these divine persons have a share, and concur in the work of our salvation; and that faith, and hope, and all the blessings of grace and glory, depend on the eternal love of God the Father, exerting itself in a way of mercy to sinners, in and by the gracious mediation of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, through the operations of the blessed Spirit.

From all these, and many other scriptures, it is evident, that in the oeconomy of our salvation, God the Father appears as vested with the supreme majesty and dignity, and maintaining the rights of godhead, as sustaining the supreme character of a divine creator and governor, offended by the sins of men, contriving a way of reconciliation, sending his only Son into the world for this end, anointing him with his own Spirit, accepting him in his sacrifice and mediation, crowning him with honours upon the discharge of his atoning work, communicating the Spirit to him, to be sent down plentifully to mankind, proposing the gospel of reconciliation to sinful men, and ordaining and appointing all things which are done by the Son and Spirit, as distinct personal agents in this glorious affair; though in the godhead they are one with him.

Question. "What are those honours which the holy scripture therefore directs us to pay to God the Father?"

Answer. The honours which we are led more directly and specially to address to God the Father, are these.

I. To adore him as the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, 1 *Pet.* i. 3. *Eph.* iii. 14. as the first in order in the sacred trinity. To worship him as sitting on the throne of government, *Rev.* iv. 9, 10. as maintaining the dignity and the rights of godhead, as creating all things, *Rev.* iv. 11. and giving laws and orders to all the creation: To humble and abase ourselves before him, as having broken his laws: To express repentance towards God, and say, "Father, we have sinned against thy heavenly majesty," *Acts* xx. 21. *Luke* xv. 18. And to return and devote ourselves afresh to God the Father, and subject ourselves to his government, against whom we had rebelled, *Hos.* xiv. 1, 2. There are so many instances of this kind of worship paid to God the Father in scripture, that I need not dwell longer upon this head.

II. Another part of divine worship due to the Father, is to offer our thanks and praises to him for all those adorable instances of his wisdom, power and goodness, which appear in the works of creation, providence and redemption: We praise him, that he should make us at first after his own image, endue us with noble faculties, and furnish this world with rich conveniencies for our use, and propose to our choice immortality and happiness. And when we had abused his goodness, and chosen sin and misery, that he should be pleased to look on fallen sinners with an eye of pity, that he appointed a way for their restoration to his favour and image, that he sent his own Son to become a mediator, that he laid on him the iniquities of men, and made his soul an offering for sin: That he also appointed the blessed Spirit to renew our natures, that he sends him to restore his own image upon us, to work faith and repentance in our hearts, to bring us into this covenant of reconciliation, and to fit us for heaven. Of this sort of worship, which consists in gratitude, doxology, blessing and praise, to the Father, there are multiplied instances in scripture.

III. We

III. We are bound also to pray to God the Father, for whatsoever mercies we stand in need of, as well as give thanks and praises to him for what we receive, whether these mercies are to be bestowed upon us immediately by the hands of the Son, or of the blessed Spirit; because both in the oeconomy of nature and grace, he is represented as the prime agent, vesting his Son and his holy Spirit with their peculiar characters and offices, and acting towards us, in and by them; though their eternal godhead be the same with that of the Father.

Thence it comes to pass, that God the Father is set forth in scripture as the most proper constant object of our addresses in worship, and that our worship is most generally to be paid to the Father in the name, or through the mediation of the Son, and by the assistance of his holy Spirit: For as it is by the mediation of his Son *Jesus Christ*, he approaches to us, and condescends to be reconciled to us, and by the operations of his blessed Spirit in us, he brings us near to himself, so he expects we should make a return of honour and worship to him in the same order and manner: And this we find appointed by our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and required and practised by his blessed apostles. This is manifest in a great number of texts in the new testament.

*John* xvi. 23, 24. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you: Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name," verse 26. "At that day ye shall ask in my name."

*John* xiv. 16. *Christ* tells us, he "will pray the Father, and he shall give us another comforter,—even the Spirit of truth," &c. And *Luke* xi. 13. *Christ* says, "Your heavenly Father will give the holy Spirit to them that ask him." So that the gift of the holy Spirit, and his divine influences for illumination, sanctification and comfort, is one of those blessings which we are to ask the Father for, as *Christ* himself did.

*Rom.* vii. 25. "I thank God through *Jesus Christ* our Lord."

*Rom.* xvi. 27. "To God only be glory through *Jesus Christ* for ever, amen."

*1 Cor.* xv. 57. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord *Jesus Christ*."

*Eph.* ii. 18. "Through him, that is *Christ*, we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father."

*Eph.* iii. 14, &c. "I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*,—that he would grant you to be strengthened by his Spirit in the inner man. That *Christ* may dwell in your hearts by faith." Verse 21. "Unto him, that is the Father, be glory in the church by *Christ Jesus* throughout all ages."—

*Eph.* v. 20. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord *Jesus Christ*."

*Phil.* ii. 11. "That every tongue should confess, that *Jesus Christ* is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

*Col.* iii. 17. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord *Jesus*, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

*Heb.* xiii. 15. "By him therefore, that is *Christ*, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually."

*Eph.* vi. 18. "Praying always, that is to God, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."

*Jude* verse 20. "Praying in the holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God," that is the Father.



*Rom. viii. 15.* "Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, *Abba* Father."

Now while the Son and the blessed Spirit are made the glorious mediums of our worship, which is addressed in this manner to the Father, they receive honours from us, such as, I think, no mere creature can have a right to, and which may be justly called divine.

But there are proper divine personal honours and worship, which scripture gives us sufficient foundation to pay more directly to the Son, and the blessed Spirit themselves, according to their several characters in the dispensation of the gospel: And in order to find out what these are, let us consider how the Son and the Spirit are represented in the holy scripture, and what characters they sustain, as we have done concerning the Father.

#### Secondly, Of the Son.

The Son is represented in scripture, as being sent down to earth by the Father to do his will; as coming from heaven, and taking flesh upon him by the appointment of his Father, as undertaking and fulfilling the glorious offices of a prophet, priest, and king, and an example of holiness; as performing all the services, and enduring all the pains and sorrows, and death itself, which were appointed for him as our great reconciler, in order to make a full and proper satisfaction for our sins, and bring us into the favour of God; as rising again from the dead, and conquering death and hell; as interceding for us in heaven, and reigning there in glory; as sending his Spirit to convince and convert sinners, to sanctify and comfort the saints; as managing all the affairs of nature and grace, for his Father's honour, and the good of his people, according as the Father has intrusted him with the government of the world and of the church; and as being ready to come with thousands of angels to judge the world, to condemn the wicked to eternal punishment, and to reward the saints with an everlasting heaven.

Therefore both the prophecies, precepts, and examples of scripture give us abundant encouragement to pay several acts of worship to the Son of God.

Question. "What are those acts of worship, and those honours which the scriptures lead us to pay to the Son?"

Answer I. We are bound to offer our humble adorations and acknowledgments, our thanks and praises to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, for all those gracious offices which he has, does, and will sustain and execute for our welfare and everlasting happiness. We adore him for his condescending mercy, and that infinite love that appeared in taking our nature upon him, and dwelling with men in such circumstances of poverty, meanness and disgrace. We adore his unspeakable pity in taking our sins upon him, and atoning for our guilt by his agonies in the garden, and his agonies on the cross. We adore and bless the prince of life who died for us, and rose again, and shews us the way to heaven. We bless him for sending his holy Spirit, for all the glorious purposes of our conviction, sanctification and salvation.

Now that direct addresses of praise and adoration may be paid to *Christ*, is very evident.

That it was our Lord *Jesus Christ*, or God the word, who was worshipped by the patriarchs, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and *Moses*, whensoever God appeared in a bodily shape, and conversed with them, is plain; for the Father never appeared thus. It was he also whom *Joshua*, *Gideon*, &c. worshipped. He is the appointed object

object of worship. *Psal.* ii. 11, 12. "Serve the Lord with fear; kiss the Son lest he be angry;—blessed are all they that put their trust in him." *Psal.* xlv. 11. "He is thy Lord, and worship thou him. And daily shall he be praised," *Psal.* lxxii. 15. And if we turn to the new testament, we shall find both commands and examples of adoration and thanksgiving paid to *Christ*.

*John* v. 22, 23. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men might honour the Son, as they honour the Father."

*Phil.* ii. 10, 11. "That at the name of *Jesus* every knee should bow, both of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that *Jesus Christ* is Lord." And thus we are bound to adore him as Lord of all things, as universal sovereign of men and angels, of all the upper and the lower worlds.

1 *Tim.* i. 12. "I thank *Jesus Christ* our Lord, who hath enabled me, and put me into the ministry."

2 *Tim.* iv. 18. "The Lord, that is *Christ*, shall deliver me from every evil, and will preserve me to his heavenly kingdom: To whom be glory for ever and ever, amen."

So in 1 *Peter* iv. 11. There is a doxology or ascription of glory to our Lord *Jesus Christ*. "To whom be praise and dominion for ever, amen"

2 *Pet.* iii. 18. "Our Saviour *Jesus Christ*. To him be glory both now and for ever, amen."

And I think that doxology in *Jude* belongs to *Christ*, as I have shewn before, verse 25. "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power both now and ever, amen."

So *Revel.* i. 5, 6 "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, amen."

*Rev.* v. 8, 9, 10. "They fell down before the lamb, and sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood," verses 12, 13. "Saying with a loud voice, worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb for ever and ever."

*Rev.* vii. 10. "Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb."

II. And as we are bound to offer thanksgiving and praise to him, and to ascribe to him, that glory and dominion which is his due, so it is our duty to pray to him, call upon him, and trust in him for those blessings, which he is exalted to bestow as our Saviour.

In short, there is no benefit which he is exalted to bestow upon us, but we may directly address him by faith and prayer for it. The following scriptures will make this evident.

*John* xiv. 1. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me," in which place, as well as many others, perhaps the word *πιστω* is better rendered "trust."

*Acts* xxii. 16. "Be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

*Stephen* just expiring prayed to *Christ*, *Acts* vii. 59. "Lord *Jesus* receive my Spirit."

2 *Cor.* xii. 8. When St. *Paul* was buffeted by *Satan*, he prayed to *Christ* for relief. "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me."

*Phil.* ii. 19. "I trust in the Lord *Jesus* to send *Timotheus*."

1 *Thess.*



1 *Thess.* iii. 11. "Our Lord *Jesus Christ* direct our way unto you."

2 *Thess.* ii. 16, 17. "Our Lord *Jesus Christ* himself, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work."

The apostle *Paul* frequently concludes his letters, both to persons and to churches, praying for "grace and peace to descend upon them from our Lord *Jesus Christ*." The apostle *John* also does the same, 2 *John* verse 3. and *Rev.* i. 4, 5. Though whether these are so explicit, and direct addresses to *Christ*, has been matter of doubt and dispute.

And as he is expressly said to be "exalted as a prince, and a Saviour to give repentance to *Israel*, and forgiveness of sins," *Acts* iv. 31. So we may properly pray to him, and trust in him to bestow on us repentance and forgiveness.

III. Self-dedication and subjection of the soul to *Christ*, as a Lord and governor, is also a part of that honour and worship which is due to him; besides fear and love, &c.

2 *Cor.* v. 15. "He died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him who died for them, and rose again."

2 *Cor.* viii. 5. "They first gave their own selves to the Lord."

*John* xiii. 13. "Ye call me master and Lord—and so I am."

*John* xiv. 15. "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

Here let it be observed also, that in several of these scriptures we are taught to pray to, or to praise, or to trust in our Lord *Jesus Christ*, not only for those blessings which he immediately bestows on us, but for those also which are bestowed more immediately by the holy Spirit, such as illumination, sanctification and comfort; because in the oeconomy of the gospel the Son of God acts toward us in many instances in and by the Spirit, and receives worship on that account; even as the Father acts in and by both the Son and the Spirit, and is accordingly worshipped, and praised for the blessings conferred on us by the Spirit or the Son.

Now because the performance of several of these offices, which our Lord *Jesus* fulfils, seems to require such a degree of knowledge, wisdom, power, glory and dignity, as belong only to the true God, and for which no person can be sufficient, which has not such an intimate union and communion in and with the divine nature; therefore when we pay these honours to *Christ* as mediator, we may be properly said to worship him with divine honours. We worship the godhead as dwelling in the man *Christ Jesus*; we worship the glorious person, "in whom dwells the fulness of the godhead bodily," *Col.* ii. 9.

And let it be noted also, that since he is the true God, or hath real communion in the divine nature, I see no plain reason why we may not worship the person of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, as the true God, even without any immediate regard to his mediatorial offices. Surely, I think, we may adore the "logos," or word, who "was with God," and who "was God," before the creation of the world, though we have now more express commands and more engaging motives to worship him as dwelling in our flesh; and as having fulfilled his mediatorial offices, and ascended to the highest heavens.

### Thirdly, Of the HOLY SPIRIT.

I proceed now to consider the character and offices, sustained by the holy Spirit in scripture, and consequently what worship is due to him.

The

The holy Spirit is represented in scripture as a personal agent, through whom God created the world, and manages the affairs of providence and grace; it is the blessed Spirit who instructed his people, published the revelations of his mind and will, inspired his prophets, wrought miracles, conducted our Lord *Jesus Christ* during his humiliation, raised up *Christ* from the dead; and then as sent by *Christ* when he was exalted in heaven, he influenced and directed his apostles, gave them a variety of miraculous gifts, sends out ministers, calls sinners, convinces and converts them to faith and holiness, sanctifies, comforts, and establishes believers, prepares and seals them for heaven and glory.

I shall not repeat here the scriptures that mention the agency of the blessed Spirit in creation and providence, but only cite some few of those, which respect his influence on, and operations by the Lord *Jesus Christ* on earth, his agency on the prophets, the apostles, and the saints and churches.

### I. On the PROPHETS.

*Acts* i. 16. "The holy Ghost by the mouth of *David* spake before."

*2 Pet.* i. 21. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Ghost."

*1 Pet.* i. 11. "The Spirit of *Christ* which was in the prophets, testified beforehand the sufferings of *Christ*, and the glory that should follow."

### II. On CHRIST on earth.

*Matth.* xii. 28. "I cast out devils by the Spirit of God."

*1 Tim.* iii. 16. "God manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit," that is, proved to be the *Messiah* by the working of the holy Spirit."

*1 Pet.* iii. 18. "*Christ*—put to death in the flesh, quickened in, or by, the Spirit," that is, from the dead.

*Acts* i. 2. "After he through the holy Ghost had given commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen."

### III. On the APOSTLES and MINISTERS.

*John* xiv. 26. "The holy Ghost shall teach you all things," and xvi. 13. "He shall guide you into all truth, and shew you things to come."

*Acts* ii. 4. "They were filled with the holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

*Rom.* xv. 19. "Through mighty signs and wonders, which *St. Paul* wrought by the power of the Spirit of God."

*1 Cor.* xii. 4, 8, 11. "Diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; but all these worketh that one and the same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." Which manner of expression denotes a sovereign, a divine and personal agency of the holy Ghost.

The holy Spirit directed the apostles where to exercise their ministry. *Acts* viii. 29. "The Spirit said to *Philip*, go near, and join thyself to the chariot of the *ethiopian*." *Acts* x. 29. "The Spirit said to *Peter*, go with the servants of *Cornelius*, doubting nothing, for I have sent them:" And we read that he bid, and forbid *Paul* to go and preach in this, or the other place as he pleased, *Acts* xvi. 6, 7.

It is



It is the Spirit who appoints the ministers of the gospel. *Acts* xiii. 2. "The holy Ghost said, separate me *Barnabas* and *Saul*, for the work whereunto I have called them." And *Acts* xx. 28. "The elders of the church of *Ephesus* were made overseers by the holy Ghost."

#### IV. "On the WORLD, but especially on the church."

*John* xvi. 8. "He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." *John* xv. 26. "The Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, shall testify of me."

*John* iii. 5. "Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

*Rom.* v. 5. "The love of God is shed abroad in your hearts by the holy Ghost."

*Rom.* viii. 13. "If through the Spirit ye do mortify the deeds of the body." Verse 16. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God."

*Rom.* xv. 16. "Being sanctified by the holy Ghost."

*1 Cor.* vi. 11. "Sanctified by the Spirit of our God."

*Titus* iii. 5. "We are saved by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the holy Ghost."

*Eph.* i. 13. "Sealed with the holy Spirit of promise."

*1 Cor.* iii. 16. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." Chapter vi. verse 19. "Your body is the temple of the holy Ghost which is in you." Thus the Spirit of God dwells in the saints, as in his own temple.

And it is he also who directs and governs the churches of *Christ*. *Rev.* ii. 7. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

Now as the new testament is full of expressions of this kind, so there are several hints of this nature in the old testament also. *David* prays for the teaching and the leading of the Spirit of God, *Psal.* cxliii. 10. He prays that the holy Spirit may not be taken from him, and that God would uphold him by his free Spirit, *Psal.* li. 11, 12. And it is the great promise frequently repeated concerning the times of the new testament, that the Spirit of God shall be given to men, shall be poured out upon them, and not depart from them, but abide with them, as a principle of knowledge and holiness, *Isai.* xlv. 3. and lix. 21. *Joel* ii. 28.

Thus it is abundantly manifest, that the Spirit of God does almost every thing that is to be done in, or by the saints, the ministers, or the churches, in order to build and support the kingdom of *Christ* in the world, and to apply the redemption of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and render it effectual to the salvation of every single christian.

Now here arise three questions.

Question I. "What honours or what worship does the scripture encourage or warrant us to pay to the blessed Spirit, according to these glorious offices, which he sustains for our sakes, and the benefits which we receive from him?"

Answer. It has been already proved under the eighth proposition, that divine worship is paid in scripture to the holy Spirit, for we are baptized into his name," *Matth.* xxviii. 19. That is, we are devoted to his service. The sacred benediction or blessing is desired to descend upon the saints from the holy Spirit, as well as from the

the Father and the Son, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. And the same is repeated by the apostle *John*, Rev. i. 4, 5. "Grace unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before the throne; and from *Jesus Christ*." Where it is generally supposed, that the blessed Spirit of God is described by seven spirits, because of his variety of gifts and graces.

We are required also not to quench the Spirit, 1 *Thess.* v. 19. not to grieve the holy Spirit of God, *Eph.* iv. 30. that is, not to resist his convictions and pious motions, as the *jews* did in elder and in later days, for which they are severely reprov'd. *Acts* vii. 51. but to obey and comply with all his holy influences, and have a most sacred regard to them.

And since there are none of us but have in some instances, more or less, resisted and quenched the good motions of the blessed Spirit, I think we may justly be allowed to mourn before him, and confess to him how much we have injured his love, and take shame to ourselves before him, for all these indignities and provocations.

As we are said also in scripture to be led by the Spirit, to be taught by the Spirit, to be strengthened and comforted by the Spirit, to be assisted in prayer, and in every good work by the same Spirit, so it is our duty to wait and depend on him for instruction, consolation and assistance in all the affairs of the christian life.

Question II. "Is it proper for us to address ourselves in a way of prayer or praise, directly to the blessed Spirit, since we can neither find it plainly commanded or practised in the word of God?"

Answer. I confess we cannot find in scripture any such positive and express precepts or examples of petition and praise, so directly addressed to the person of the holy Spirit, as there are to the Father and to the Son.

One reason may be this, because in the oeconomy of the gospel he is not seated on a throne of majesty, nor sustains a royal character; but he is rather represented as acting in subordination to the Father and the Son, and sent by the Father and the Son, as a prime minister in their kingdom. And therefore since our worship of the blessed trinity is generally regulated by the oeconomy of the gospel, our direct addresses are generally made to the Father or to the Son, who are seated on a throne, and sustain a royal character in this oeconomy.

I would add also, that though the Son himself is represented as Lord and king in this oeconomy, yet he is often described as acting in subordination to the Father: And it is for this reason, it may be, that there are but few addresses made directly and distinctly to the Son of God himself in the scripture, in comparison of those which are made in general to God, or distinctly to the Father.

Another reason why the holy Spirit has not such direct and express addresses made to him as the Father and the Son in scripture may be this, that the agency and seat of the Father and Son are described as in heaven, where they dwell, to receive our homage and worship, and to send down blessings; but the agency and seat of the holy Spirit is within us, where he dwells to assist us in paying that homage and worship to the Son and the Father. Now there may seem to be some reason, why our direct adorations and addresses of prayer and praise should chiefly be offered to those persons of the sacred trinity, which are represented as sitting upon a throne in heaven, rather than to that person who is represented as dwelling within ourselves, and exerting his divine powers there.

Yet since we have proved before, that the Spirit hath real, true and proper communion in the godhead, and that he is one God with the Father and the Son, it is certain



certain that he knows all our wants, our desires and our petitions, for he is omniscient: He is able to supply them all, for he is almighty: And he is particularly ordained in this glorious oeconomy to enlighten, convince, convert, sanctify, comfort, and save us, to bestow gifts, graces and divine blessings upon us; and to fit us for the inheritance of heaven; and upon these accounts there is sufficient ground, in my judgment, to address ourselves to him by way of prayer, for the spiritual mercies we want; and by way of praise, for the blessings we receive; and especially upon some particular occasions, wherein the agency of the Spirit is most eminently concerned.

There is this plain reason for it.

If there be any mere creature, to whom I can certainly communicate the knowledge of my wants, who has also power to supply them, and has a particular office or appointment for this end, surely all the light of reason and scripture lead me to address him by petition for a supply, and to give him thanks for what I have received; much more then may I pay the same sort of honours in a divine manner, to the blessed Spirit, who is the true God, and knows all my wants, and all my prayers and praises.

Finally, Since learned men have found in the primitive ages, some few hints or examples of a doxology, or ascription of praise to the holy Spirit together with the Father and the Son, though there be no such example in scripture, and since this has been the frequent custom of the church in all these later ages, I cannot see any sufficient reason to renounce or forsake it, since it is built on such plain and natural reasonings and consequences drawn from scripture.

It may be expedient to practise it frequently in some churches where it has been long used, lest great offence be given; it may be proper also sometimes to use it on purpose to hold forth the doctrine of the trinity in times of error, and to take away all suspicion of heresy from the public worship.

Yet I cannot but give my opinion, that since the apostles continually vary their doxologies, it is a piece of christian prudence not to confine one's self everlastingly to any one certain form of doxology, lest the people think that very form to be of sacred necessity: And I am not willing to be the man who should venture to say, there is an absolute necessity of using any doxology, which has no pattern or precept in scripture.

We must have a care lest we make any thing necessary by mere human custom or constitution, which the holy scripture hath not made so by a divine appointment. For though I have shewn that there is in scripture a sufficient foundation to allow and support the common doxology, yet there is no plain and positive command for it there, nor any account of the practice of it \*.

Question:

\* The doxologies used in the new testament are these, viz. *Rom. xi. 36.* "Of him, and through him, and to him are all things. To whom be glory for ever, amen." *Rom. xvi. 27.* "To God only wise be glory through *Jesus Christ*, for ever, amen." *Gal. i. 4, 5.* "According to the will of God and our Father. To him be glory for ever and ever, amen." *Ephes. iii. 21.* "To him be glory in the church, by *Christ Jesus*, throughout all ages, world without end, amen." *Phil. iv. 20.* Now to God and our Father be glory for ever and ever, amen." *1 Tim. i. 17.* "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever, amen." *1 Tim. vi. 16.* "Whom no man hath seen, or can see. To whom be honour and power everlasting, amen." *2 Tim. iv. 18.* "The Lord shall deliver me, &c. to whom be glory for ever and ever, amen." *Heb. xiii. 21.* "The God of peace, through *Jesus Christ*, to whom be glory for ever, amen." *1 Pet. iv. 11.* "That God in all things may be glorified, through *Jesus Christ*, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever, amen." *1 Pet. i. 3.* "Blessed

Question III. "Is it lawful in our doxologies or ascriptions of praise, to pay the same worship to the holy Spirit, or to the Son, as we do to the Father?"

Answer I. It is the divine nature or godhead in each person, that is the only foundation of divine worship; and since it is one and the same godhead, that subsists in the Spirit and the Son, as in the Father, therefore when we use such acts and forms of devotion in blessing and praising God, as agree to the godhead considered absolutely in itself, we may pay the same worship to Father, Son and Spirit, or to the godhead subsisting in three persons. But secondly,

Answer II. If we consider the three persons of the trinity in their distinct personal properties and characters, it is utterly inconsistent with the whole current of scripture to pay the same form of address and adoration to each of the sacred three. As for instance,

We adore the Father as the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, as the first person in the sacred order of the trinity; we bless him for sending his own Son into our nature, and for appointing him to be our high priest, our sacrifice, and our great reconciler; we give him thanks for the gift of his holy Spirit, given first to *Jesus Christ* our Lord, and by him to us. But we cannot offer the same forms of expression, nor indeed the same acts of inward worship to the persons of the Son or the holy Spirit.

In like manner we give praise and thanks to the Son; that he condescended to be made "partaker of our flesh and blood;" that he "bore our sins in his body on the tree;" that he was "slain, and washed us in his blood, and redeemed us to God, and made us kings and priests to God and his Father;" we bless him, because he intercedes for us at the throne in heaven; and that he, by his Father's appointment and deputation, governs and disposes of all things for the good of his church here on earth. Now these doxologies or thanksgivings cannot be addressed to the person of the Spirit, nor to God the Father.

And I think it is in this sense, we may best understand those words in *John* v. 22, 23. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men might honour the Son, as they honour the Father." That is, since the Father, who is represented as the original governour and judge of mankind, hath vested the Son as mediator with this authority of government and judgment, therefore those divine honours that belong to the Father, considered as governor and judge, may be properly paid to the Son; and this without the least infringement of the rights of godhead, since the Son is also true God, or hath communion in the divine nature. For though I do not think it is the direct design of that place to express the divinity of the Son, yet I think that such a command would not have been given if the Son had not been true God.

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Yet

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*." 2 *Pet.* iii. 18. "Our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, to him be glory both now, and for ever, amen." *Jude* verse 25. "To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory, and majesty, dominion, and power, both now and ever, amen." *Rev.* i. 5, 6. "To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, &c. be glory, and dominion, for ever and ever, amen." *Rev.* iv. 11. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." *Rev.* v. 12. "Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing. Verse 13. "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be to him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb, for ever and ever, amen." *Rev.* vii. 10. "Salvation unto our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and to the lamb." Verse 12. "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God, for ever and ever, amen." *Rev.* xix. 1. "Alleluia: salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God."



Yet let it be noted here, that we cannot address *Jesus Christ* the Son, considered personally, in all respects with the same honours as we address the Father; because we cannot say to *Christ*, "Lord, thou art the God and Father of *Christ*; thou art the original judge of all, and thou hast given all judgment into the hands of thy Son." These sort of addresses belong peculiarly and only to the Father, and if paid to *Christ* personally considered are ridiculous and absurd.

But to proceed. We may pay also divine honours and praise to the holy Spirit for his miraculous gifts of old, for inspiring the prophets and apostles, for all his distributions of gifts, graces, and sacred influences to his churches, his saints, and his ministers in our days. But if we mention expressly his deputation to this sacred office by the Father and the Son, then we give thanks to the holy Spirit, who has accepted this office in our salvation, to enlighten, comfort and sanctify us; and in executing this blessed office by commission from the Father and Son, distributes his gifts and his graces among us. Now this form of words could not properly be used in an address to the Father, nor to the Son. Yet in the third place,

Answer III. I would make this remark here, viz. That when we mention merely the benefits that we receive from the Son or Spirit, we may give thanks to God the Father for them all, because in the order of the gospel, he sent both the Spirit and the Son to provide and bestow those blessings on us. Thus we may bless God the Father for the atonement of *Christ*, and his glorious righteousness; for the providential government of *Christ* over the nations, and his spiritual government over his church, as well as for the enlightening, sanctifying and comforting influences of the holy Ghost, &c.

We may give thanks also to the Son, for all the benefits that we receive from the holy Spirit, for it is the Son who by the appointment and gift of the Father sends the holy Spirit to us.

But we cannot properly give thanks to the Son or the Spirit, considered in their distinct personal characters, for all the benefits and blessings which are particularly attributed to the Father in scripture; such as contriving our salvation, sending the Son to purchase it, and by the hands of the Son sending the Spirit to apply it; for this would bring confusion into that admirable divine order, which God hath established in our salvation.

All these things flow with so clear and natural an evidence from the scriptures, which have been before cited, that it is needless to cite and repeat them here.

Thus it is abundantly evident, that distinct personal honours, must be addressed to the three sacred persons, on the account of their different properties, characters and offices, though the same absolute and essential honours of the deity or godhead may be addressed to all three together, or to God subsisting in three persons. Now in the fourth place,

Answer IV. To give a short and direct answer to the third question. When the common doxologies are used, wherein glory is given to the Father, Son and Spirit, in the same form of words, we may either understand the absolute essential honours of godhead, which we give to the divine nature, subsisting in Father, Son and Spirit; or we may in our thoughts give adoration and thanks to each of the sacred three for the various and distinct offices they sustain, and distinct benefits we receive from them.

If we may dare to make use of the similitude before mentioned, and conceive of a king, whose soul doth also animate and actuate an ambassador extraordinary and a resident in a foreign country, and by their means bestow blessings on his subjects in that foreign country, we may in some measure apprehend how far each of these

these persons may have communion in the same royal honours, and how far their particular personal honours are distinct from each other: But no human simile can perfectly express things divine.

To conclude, I have here shewn what are the general honours of the godhead subsisting in three persons; and what are the particular divine honours that belong to each person, as sustaining particular characters and offices in the oeconomy of creation, providence and redemption. And though the Son and the Spirit may be properly addressed with divine honours, as having communion in true godhead, yet since the scripture is given us to direct our worship, is it not better in our most common and usual addresses to God to follow the express directions and examples of scripture, and imitate the inspired apostles, those first and most glorious christians?

And since we find so great a silence in scripture of any express precepts or patterns; of prayer or praise, directed distinctly to the person of the blessed Spirit, let us not bind it upon our own consciences, nor upon others, as a piece of necessary worship; but rather practise it occasionally as prudence and expedience may require.

Since we find both precepts and patterns for prayer and praise to be often addressed to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, let us also often call upon the name of the Lord *Jesus*, and direct frequent doxologies to the lamb that was slain.

But since the most frequent patterns and precepts in scripture lead us to direct our addresses to God the Father, who transacts all his affairs with us, in and through his Son by his holy Spirit, I think we should also make it the most frequent and usual practice in our devotions, "to have our access through *Jesus Christ*, by one Spirit unto the Father," *Eph. ii. 18.* that is, to address the Father, by the mediation of the Son, through the assistance of the holy Spirit; that this divine oeconomy, which is the substance and glory of the christian religion, and runs through the whole of it, might be visible also in our common devotions, and appear manifestly to run through the several parts of christian worship in which we are engaged.

#### P R O P O S I T I O N XXI.

*In so doing we shall effectually secure our own salvation: For the scripture has made our salvation to depend on those relations and offices which these divine persons sustain, and on the honours due to them according to these offices, rather than upon any deep philosophical notions of their essence and personalities, any nice and exact acquaintance with their mysterious union and distinction.*

I Have said before, that I know not how we can pay such honours and worship to *Christ* or the blessed Spirit, as are expressed and described in the new testament, unless we suppose them to have some real communion in the divine nature, and to have true godhead belonging to them: Yet if we turn over all the books of the new testament, we shall find that the stress of our salvation is laid upon our humble sense of our sins, our return to God the Father by sincere repentance, and change of heart and life, and our unfeigned faith in the Lord *Jesus*. These were the great and glorious things that *St. Paul* mentions as the sum of his preaching in order to the salvation of men. *Acts xx. 21.* "Testifying both to the jews and also to the greeks, repentance toward God; and faith toward our Lord *Jesus Christ*."

And when the things absolutely necessary to salvation are mentioned, which relate particularly to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, these are generally comprehended in a belief



belief of the characters and offices of *Christ*, as the great promised *Messiah*, as a Saviour, a prophet, a mediator, a priest, and proper sacrifice of atonement, as a Lord and king, as an example, as a head of vital influence, as our final judge, &c. together with our sense of his all-sufficiency for those offices, and our sacred practical regards to him in the discharge of them. These are the chief things required in order to salvation; and not a distinct knowledge or belief how or in what manner he is the same with the Father, and in what manner he differs from the Father.

The language in which the requisites of salvation are generally expressed, as they relate to *Christ* or the holy Spirit, is as follows.

*Acts* xvi. 31. "Believe on the Lord *Jesus*, and thou shalt be saved."

*Mark* i. 15. "Repent ye, and believe the gospel," that is, the glad tidings of peace with God by *Jesus Christ* the *Messiah*.

*Mark* xvi. 16. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

*John* viii. 24. "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins," that is, if ye believe not that I am the *Messiah*, the promised Saviour of mankind.

*Acts* ii. 38. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of *Jesus Christ* for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the holy Ghost."

*John* iii. 3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," verse 5. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God:" that is, except he be inwardly regenerated, sanctified and cleansed from sin by the influence of the holy Spirit, as we are outwardly baptized and cleansed with water, he cannot be saved.

*Rom.* viii. 9. "If any man have not the Spirit of *Christ*, he is none of his."

Verse 13. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

*Rom.* x. 9. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, the Lord *Jesus*, and shalt believe with thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Verse 13. "He that calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

*Acts* x. 43. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins."

*John* i. 12. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name."

*John* vi. 37. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

*Matth.* xi. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

*Heb.* vii. 25. "He is able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him."

*Rom.* iii. 25. "Him hath God set forth for a propitiation, through faith in his blood."

*2 Tim.* i. 12. "I know whom I have believed, that is *Christ*, and I am persuaded he is able to keep what I have committed to him against that day."

*Heb.* v. 9. "He became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him."

*John* vi. 40. "This is the will of him that hath sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: And I will raise him up at the last day."

Now faith or believing in our Lord *Jesus*, is most frequently mentioned here: And this, so far as we can find it explained in scripture, and made necessary to salvation, signifies chiefly, a believing him to be the *Messiah*, the *Christ*, who was foretold by all the ancient prophets as the Saviour of mankind, and it includes in it, or necessarily

necessarily draws after it, such addresses of the soul, and sacred regards to him, as are suited to his character as the Lord and Saviour of mankind, and the only and all-sufficient mediator between God and man.

The only difficulty lies in this, that several places of the new testament seem to make a belief of *Christ* to be the Son of God necessary to salvation, as *John* xx. 31. "These things are written, that ye might believe that *Jesus* is the *Christ*, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." 1 *John* v. 13. "These things have I written unto you, that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." 1 *John* iv. 15. "Whosoever shall confess that *Jesus* is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him." 1 *John* ii. 23. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father."

Now the objection runs thus. If we are required to believe that *Christ* is the Son of God, then we must know and believe what is this relation of sonship to God the Father in order to salvation, and this seems to be more than a mere knowledge and belief of his offices, and his all-sufficient capacity to fulfil them.

In answer to this objection, I have shewn in a particular discourse, which I had designed once to publish at the end of this book, what appears to me the true meaning of this name, "Son of God;" and upon the best judgement I can make, by a comparison of scriptures together, I am inclined to believe that this name Son of God signifies, "That glorious person who has in general some peculiar and sublime relation to God the Father, and is appointed to be the *Messiah* or Saviour;" and the chief things included herein are his office and his divine fitness and capacity to fulfil it; and it is under this notion *Christ* was preached to the *jews*, and believed on by the disciples. It is this that renders him directly suitable to the necessities of perishing sinners, and a most proper object for the exercises of a saving faith. This therefore is the most natural and probable sense of this title, "the Son of God," in the general use of it in the new testament; and especially in those places where our salvation is made to depend on the belief of it.

This imperfect idea or conception of some glorious and peculiar but unknown relation to God, seems to be the utmost which at that time the disciples could well arrive at, concerning his Sonship.

How far they could be apprized of his true godhead, I make not the matter of my present enquiry: Their faith of that sometimes at least seemed to be fluttering and dubious. But as to their notion of his sonship, they seem to have no certain idea whether it related to his body, or his soul, to his divine nature, or his office, or to several of these together.

It is hard to suppose, that the eternal generation of the Son of God, as a distinct person, yet co-equal, and consubstantial, or of the same essence with the Father, should be made a fundamental article of faith, in that dawn of the gospel, that hour of *jewish* twilight between declining *judaism* and rising christianity. It is very hard to imagine, that God should propose so sublime a doctrine of so obscure and doubtful evidence in that day, as a test to the faith of poor ignorant fishermen, and pronounce damnation on the disbelief of it.

I am persuaded therefore, that faith in him as the divine *Messiah*, or the all-sufficient and appointed Saviour, is the thing required in those very texts where he is called the Son of God, and proposed as such for the object of our belief: And that a belief of the natural and eternal and consubstantial sonship of *Christ* to God as a Father, was not made the necessary term or requisite of salvation, neither in those

text;



texts before-mentioned, nor in any others. Nor indeed can I find it asserted or revealed with so much evidence in any part of the word of God, as is necessary to make it a fundamental article of my faith.

This doctrine of the co-eternal generation and consubstantial and co-equal sonship, is but one of the learned schemes found out to explain the "modus" or manner of one godhead subsisting in distinct persons. Now I would fain have my readers learn that our faith in the scripture doctrine of the true and eternal godhead of *Christ*, which is plainly revealed, does not necessarily depend on any of those learned schemes and explications, which, if they are not merely humane, yet are of more doubtful revelation, and a matter of difficulty and dispute even among the learned and pious trinitarians.

I grant it indeed a very possible thing, that the great God may propose any sublime truth to our belief, as a test of the obedience of our understandings to his word, and a trial of the submission of our reason to faith and divine revelation. But then such a truth must be revealed with bright evidence, and great plainness in the word of God. And we ought to keep our consciences under so awful a sense of this sovereignty of God, as to make us willing to submit our belief to every such truth plainly revealed in scripture, even though it may surmount our present comprehension. And since God hath revealed it, I think, with sufficient evidence in scripture, that the Son and holy Spirit have real communion with the Father, in the divine nature or godhead, and are the one true God, we should be much afraid to allow our selves in any degrading sentiments concerning those glorious persons, and maintain a holy jealousy, lest we defraud them of that due honour and divine veneration, which belongs to those sacred three who are in one godhead.

Yet if I may give up my thoughts and judgment entirely to the conduct of scripture, I am there led to believe that the practical concern we have with these three persons of the blessed trinity, is of far greater importance in the matter of salvation, than any of the nice and speculative notions and terms of art concerning the essence, union, and distinction of the Father, Son and holy Spirit; though we must always take heed to maintain such notions concerning their nature, powers and properties, as are sufficient to support and justify all the practical honours and duties we pay to them.

#### P R O P O S I T I O N XXII.

*The man therefore who professes each of the sacred three to have sufficient divine power, and capacity to sustain the characters, and fulfil the offices attributed to them in scripture, and pays due honour to them according to those offices, may justly be owned by me, and received as a christian brother; though we may differ much in our notions and opinions about the explication of the blessed trinity, or though we may both be ignorant or doubtful of the true way of explaining it.*

**N**O man can pay the honours due to our Lord *Jesus*, unless he believe him to have the dignity and perfections of godhead belonging to him, so far as to answer the purposes of an all-sufficient sacrifice, and atonement for sin, so far as to give him universal acquaintance with the infinite affairs of his kingdom in the world and the church, together with equal power to manage and controul all things in the regions

gions of heaven, earth and hell : But these powers and capacities do not depend on any particular mode of explaining the trinity.

No man can pay the honours due to the blessed Spirit, unless he believe him to have such communion in godhead, as to render him fit for the universal agent or minister in this most extensive kingdom of *Christ*, that he may both know and influence all the infinite affairs of creation and providence and grace : But these powers and capacities do not depend on any particular mode of explaining the trinity.

No man therefore, in my judgment, can pay due honours to the Son or Spirit, unless he believe them to be the true God ; though he may pay all necessary honours to them without knowing how to explain the "modus" or manner how they are one God and yet distinct persons.

He therefore that appears to me to be a hearty lover of God and *Jesus Christ*, a humble inquirer and searcher after truth, that believes and professes our Lord *Jesus* and the blessed Spirit to have such a real communion in the divine nature, or such an oneness with God, as is sufficient to sustain all the glorious offices which are assigned to them in scripture, particularly the satisfaction for our sins, the sanctification of our natures, and the government and influence over the visible and invisible worlds, and such as is sufficient to render them the proper objects of divine worship according to those various offices, he shall not be excluded by me from the number of the faithful, for any defect in this article of the catholic faith.

And if he make this confession honestly in any words of his own chusing, and make it evident to me, that his sense and meaning amounts to what I have here expressed, I shall venture to call him my fellow christian and my brother ; nor shall I dare to condemn him, though he refuse to make use of the expressions I have here written, or any other words that I should chuse for him. If a man has "faith and knowledge," though I may fancy him to be rude in knowledge and weak in the faith, yet I am commanded to receive him, and "not to doubtful disputations," *Rom. xiv. 1.*

But while I am professing christian charity, I would set a due honour and defence upon the christian faith ; and amidst all my love to men, I would remember what honours are due to *Christ*, "my Lord and my God." "Whosoever abideth not in the necessary doctrine of *Christ*, hath not God, nor is he to be received into the church," nor the house, as a christian brother, or as a friend. 2 *John* verse 9. If I read and believe the word of God, I must believe there are some such gross errors in doctrine, that will as effectually exclude from the church of *Christ* and from the kingdom of heaven, as gross immoralities in practice : There are such things as damnable heresies which will bring upon the professors of them swift destruction ; and the apostle assures us that one of these heresies is a "denial of the Lord that bought them," 2 *Pet. ii. 1.*

## C O N C L U S I O N.

**B**Efore I put a full end to this little treatise, I would ask leave of my readers, and especially those of younger years, to propose to them these two heads of advice relating to the doctrine of the trinity. The first refers to our inquiry into the doctrine itself. The second to our establishment in the faith of it.

The directions I would give concerning our inquiries into this great doctrine are these.



I. "Seek for it chiefly in the word of God;" build your faith entirely upon this word, and not upon the books of men. There you will be sure to find no human additions to it, but the pure divine doctrine itself. And whensoever you consult the writings of men on this subject, dare to admit nothing but what you see evidently proved by the word of God. Judicious collections out of the holy scripture relating to this article, are of great use, when they are not chosen and culled out, and put together merely to serve and support some particular scheme of explication. Though the writings of men may be of great service, yet you must use them only as helps not as determiners of your faith.

II. "Read the word with holy reverence and humility of soul," resolving to believe whatsoever you find there plainly revealed, whether you can reconcile it or no to your own fancies or former opinions. Read with an awful submission of your understandings to the authority of God speaking in his word. See Proposition XVI.

III. "Read and pursue your inquiries with a solemn concern about the importance of this doctrine." Let not a vain, light, airy spirit tempt you ever to think or speak of it as a trivial matter, nor to mix it with common careless talk, nor profane it by noisy janglings, and a vain affectation of disputes about so divine a mystery. I fear this is a most provoking sin in our day.

IV. "Read with an abasing sense of your own weakness and darkness of mind," and with importunate prayer to God for the teachings of his Spirit, who searches the deep things of God, and is promised to be given to those that ask it, and to lead them into all necessary truth.

V. "Set yourself to this work with great solemnity," and let your judgment determine itself in this important article, as in the presence of God your supreme and final judge. Dare not to indulge any old prejudices, or a vain affectation of novelty. Do not consult with flesh and blood, or suffer any carnal interests to have influence upon your judgment, or to bias your assent to any principle or opinion. Let nothing but the convincing evidence of scripture decide the question, and settle your faith. Take heed lest you build your belief upon any reasons or motives which you cannot justify to your conscience under the sharpest and severest enquiry: nor take up merely with such a shew of argument, either to confirm or renounce any important article as you dare not produce at the bar of God, and speak it boldly as a proof of your faith in the face of men and angels.

VI. And while you read and meditate on this subject, and pursue your inquiries about this important point of religion, "watch and preserve a pure and holy frame of soul." Take heed lest you indulge a haughty, or a sensual, sinful temper; examine your hearts and your ways, and remove every iniquity; lest the great and dreadful God, who is jealous for the honour of his name, should be provoked to leave you to your own darkness, or abandon you to the foolish fires of fancy; lest he should give you up in judgment to the vain dictates of a proud and conceited mind, and thereby you may be intangled in the most pernicious errors, or lost in everlasting wanderings.

The directions which relate to our establishment in the faith of the trinity are these.

I. "Furnish your memory with those portions of holy scripture, wherein this sacred doctrine is most clearly expressed," and by which it is most effectually supported: That you may be "ready to give to every one that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear;" 1 Pet. iii. 15. that you may have an answer ready at hand to repel the assaults of error and temptation. The sword of the Spirit,

Spirit, which is the word of God, and the shield of faith in that word, are admirable pieces of christian armour and artillery in an evil day.

II. "Maintain a firm and resolute assent to what the word of God plainly reveals concerning this divine doctrine," and be not ever wavering and tossed in your mind, with a kind of doubtful uncertainty, merely because you cannot explain the matter, and adjust every difficulty.

Keep on your spirit such a holy awe of the majesty and authority of God speaking in his word, that you may never stagger in the faith, which you can find so clearly dictated from heaven. Nor be ashamed to profess it at all proper occasions.

Having settled the substance of this doctrine in your minds, and founded it on the plain and solid evidence of scripture, you ought not to doubt and waver, much less to desert your faith merely because you cannot answer every objection against it: For even in the affairs of nature and the civil life, as doctor *Owen* well expresses it, "If the objections wherewith we may be entangled be not of the same weight and importance with the reason for which we imbraced any opinion, it is a madness to forego it on the account thereof. And much more must this hold amongst the common sort of christians, in things spiritual and divine. If they will let go, and part with their faith in any truth, because they are not able to answer distinctly some objections that may be made against it, they may quickly find themselves disputed into atheism."

In every sacred truth that is revealed to us, a plain evidence and full assurance that God hath said it, should be a sufficient answer to a thousand objections.

III. Since a particular knowledge of the "modus" or manner, how three persons are one God, is not clearly revealed in scripture, and therefore not necessary to salvation, "Be not too fond of any learned explications of this sacred mystery." Do not give into them too soon, nor yield your full assent to them too easily, nor be furiously zealous in the defence of them. Do not fix and root your judgment too fast in any of these schemes of explaining the trinity, till you see most abundant and convincing evidence; and take care that you do not mingle any of these explications with the plain scriptural doctrine, so as to make them necessary articles of your faith. Hereby you will obtain great advantage in a day of temptation, as will appear thus;

You may observe it has been the usual and subtle practice of our adversaries to cavil at our faith of the trinity by perplexing some part of our learned explications and schemes with knotty objections and arguments: And many times they have found themselves so successful herein, that they have sorely shaken the faith of many a christian, merely because he had mingled his opinions and his faith together, and joined the scriptural doctrine of the trinity together with some learned hypothesis to explain it, in the same article of his faith. Whereas a man that well distinguishes between the plain scriptural doctrine itself, and the particular explications of it, holds his faith in the divine doctrine firm and unmoved, while several human forms of explication are attacked, and perhaps destroyed. Such a christian may triumph in a day of temptation, and may defend his creed, by keeping close to what the scripture has most evidently revealed, while he sees others that have built a high superstructure of notions about this doctrine, make shipwreck of their opinions, and their faith together.

IV. I would add this also, that one effectual method to establish the heart in this divine and important truth, is to "to take a due survey what a sacred influence it has into all the parts of our holy religion:" And when we feel the daily want of the blessed trinity, we shall not easily part with the doctrine. Let us keep a humble sense of the



deplorable state of sin and ruin, into which the fall of man has brought us, and then we may see what need there is of the presence of a God in all the parts of our recovery and salvation. We may then see what need we have of so divine and almighty a reconciler as *Jesus* the Son of God, to bring us into his favour; and what need of the almighty operations of the blessed Spirit to create us anew, and to restore us to his image. And since true and proper divinity or godhead is ascribed to those two glorious persons who are employed in this work, our hopes hereby have a surer refuge, and our faith a more immediate and divine foundation. It is quite contrary to our duty and our interest, to change such a saviour, and such a sanctifier, for any meaner beings which men may be tempted to put into these sacred offices, since the great and blessed God, subsisting in three persons, is pleased to undertake them, in various forms of condescension.

To conclude, let us with humble faith read and believe this glorious doctrine of the christian trinity, so far as it is declared in the holy scripture: Let us adore God the Father, as the author of all our mercies and our hopes. Let us trust in *Jesus Christ* his Son with a divine faith, as our almighty Saviour, and obey him as our sovereign Lord. Let us wait for and seek the almighty and divine influences of the blessed Spirit to enlighten, to sanctify and to comfort us, and to carry us onward in our way to heaven. Let us be constant and zealous in paying these divine honours to the sacred three, which the word of God hath appointed, and upon which scripture hath taught us to expect eternal life: And then if God be faithful, and his gospel true, eternal life shall be our portion in the other world, though we know not how to explain all divine mysteries in this.

Now to the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit, three persons and one God, be all honour and glory, and everlasting praise, amen.

# DISSERTATIONS

Relating to the

Christian Doctrine

O F T H E

T R I N I T Y.

The FIRST PART, viz.

- I. The ARIAN invited to the orthodox faith.
- II. God and man united in the person of CHRIST.
- III. The worship of CHRIST as mediator founded on his godhead.



# DISSEMINATION

## Christian Doctrine

### TRINITY

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is a central tenet of Christianity, asserting the existence of one God in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This doctrine is foundational to the faith, as it defines the nature of God and the relationship between the three persons. The Trinity is often described as a mystery, meaning that it cannot be fully understood by human reason alone. It is a doctrine that has been debated and discussed for centuries, and it remains a cornerstone of Christian theology.

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T H E  
P R E F A C E.

WHILE I was writing the little treatise of the "christian doctrine of the trinity," the subject carried my thoughts away into several occasional sentiments, and incidental truths. These would have interrupted the thread of my designed discourse too much, if they had been mingled with the several propositions to which they belong. I thought it proper therefore to throw them into distinct dissertations, several of which I had concluded before that treatise was made public.

It was my design to have finished them all at that time; but some providential occurrences broke off those studies, and I have been farther prevented by other requests of my friends, and my own promised engagements of various kinds, from resuming that subject again, till a few months ago this last winter. A man who through long weakness of body is rendered sometimes incapable of applying himself above six or seven hours in a week to any peculiar study, distinct from his necessary work, may be well excused if he is slow in the publication of any thing upon such a controverted doctrine.

I confess when I wrote that little book, I had no purpose of engaging myself in controversy. My intention was only to exhibit the plain naked doctrine of the trinity, viz. "That the Father, Son, and Spirit, are represented in scripture under three personal characters, and yet as having communion in one godhead," without entering into any particular modes of explication, and without pretending to say new things on that article, either by way of position or argument. My chief view and design was to establish plain, unlearned christians in the faith of that doctrine, by those scriptural evidences, which seemed to me strong and convincing; and to lay a foundation for extensive charity, by making it appear that no particular mode of explication was plainly and evidently determined in the word of God: And that the scripture has made our salvation to depend on those offices which these divine persons sustain, and on the honours due to them according to those offices, rather than upon any deep philosophical notions of their essence and personalities, any nice and exact acquaintance with their mysterious union and distinction.

I presumed therefore, that if any persons who disbelieved the proper deity of the Son and Spirit, had a mind to signalize themselves by an opposition to the common faith, they would have chosen some author of superior rank, who had entered more largely into the merits of the cause, and by a full and particular explication of the scriptural proofs thereof, had vindicated that doctrine in a more complete and controversial manner. But I found myself mistaken; for some months after my treatise appeared in the world, there was published a professed answer to it, bearing this title,



title, "A sober appeal to a *turk* or an *indian* concerning the plain sense of scripture relating to the trinity, being an answer to Mr. *J. Watts's* late book, intituled, *The christian doctrine, &c.*" I have a very great disinclination to handle the saw of controversy, especially in matters so divine and sacred; and my imperfect health does by no means permit me to lay out many hours in such work. My life itself, that is, all the useful moments of it, are so shortened and diminished hereby, that I find them all much too few for the more agreeable parts of that service to which *Christ* has called me; and upon this account I shall not think myself obliged to enter the lists with any antagonist whatsoever, upon matters of dispute and intricacy, either now or hereafter.

Yet since I had promised some occasional dissertations on this subject, I found it was much expected by the world, that I should then take some notice of this author and his work, which I have now done in several of the discourses which I have written, and endeavoured to lay a foundation for the support of the common doctrine of the trinity, by obviating some of his most plausible objections.

And since I never designed to give a large and particular answer to the "sober appeal," for the reasons already mentioned, I think it proper here to make a few general remarks on the style and manner of that writing.

And first I acknowledge my obligations to the author, for the terms of decency and respect, and the language of friendship with which he treats me, both in the preface and in the greatest part of his book. I receive them as the unmerited civilities of a courteous stranger: And had I the happiness of knowing his name, perhaps I should find just occasion to make an equal return. But while I am permitted to learn his character no otherwise but from his writing, I can only treat my unknown friend with all that esteem which his writing deserves. For I must confess, how superior soever others may appear in learning and argument, yet I am not willing any writer should exceed me in the practices of a christian temper.

But I hope my respondent will not take it ill, if I mention a few instances, wherein he seems to have been awakened by his zeal to forget his usual style: As when he takes occasion to pity me and all my friends, for the shifts we are put to in the defence of our doctrine. When he tells me he will not triumph over the weakness of my arguments, and yet affects a triumph in several places; with some other such superior airs, which he assumes in the course of the debate. This language carries a sort of sovereignty and contempt in it, but adds neither force nor ornament to the paragraph or the cause.

Again, He seems to indulge the same insulting strain, when he repeats so often the words *resistless* and *over-bearing*, which I think I had never used but once or twice at most. This represents me as though I had supposed every single argument of mine to be *over-bearing* and *resistless*; whereas in those places where I use either of these words, they refer chiefly to the whole strength of all the arguments put together, and which, I confess, still I cannot resist; and multitudes of christians have confessed the same. If I any where use such language on lighter occasions I receive the reproof.

He seems again to forget his usual candour, when he construes my words in his preface, and his appendix, as casting damnation on all those who disbelieve the eternal deity of *Christ*, by my citing the words of the apostle, 2 *Pet.* ii. 1. "Damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them, page 489. I must confess, I do not think that scripture particularly refers to those that deny the godhead of *Christ*; but rather to those that deny him as a holy governor of his people: Or else it re-

proves

proves in general all those that deny *Christ* in any of those powers, properties, offices, or characters, the belief of which is made necessary to salvation. Now when the first part of my book is spent in proving the deity of *Christ* and the Spirit, the second part of it in declaring their personality, and the third or last part in surveying their several offices and relations in which they stand to us, and upon a recapitulation I make this conclusion, "That there are such things as damnable heresies, when persons deny the Lord that bought them;" this should, with much more justice, be referred, as I designed it, to the denial of all or any of these preceding properties, characters, or offices of *Christ*, the belief of which the scripture makes necessary to salvation, and not merely be confined to the single doctrine of his deity.

Another thing I am constrained to take notice of is, that my unknown friend the appellant had written with a greater degree of open fairness and evidence, if he had attacked my propositions in the method in which I have placed them, wherein they give mutual light and force to each other: But he has chosen rather to single out for his first attacks some special paragraphs out of distant places of my book, whereby he seems to insinuate to the reader the weakness of my whole argument; and he spends above sixty pages upon these, till at last he himself confesses, that he "thinks it high time to enter upon the arguments I have used," page 62. And even then he "intreats patience once more" for three pages, ere he enters upon a regular form of objection, page 65. But however it be, I have this advantage by it, that as other circumstances permit me not to engage in any regular or continued controversy, so I am the better justified to all the world in taking notice of what this author hath objected, in several unconnected dissertations.

I have not much reason to complain of misrepresentations of my sense by the appellant, in the matters of argument. One of the most remarkable instances of this kind is, when he supposes me to believe a "greater distinction between the sacred three in the godhead itself" than my words amount to, as page 10, and other places. For though I confess the scriptural representation of personal distinctions in some places is pretty strong, yet I have no where asserted three literal and proper distinct personalities to be internal and essential to the godhead itself. In general I must own he has written with a degree of impartiality and fairness in this respect beyond what is usual in such controversies; and if ever he has mistaken my sense, I persuade myself that it was not done with design, because, except the places mentioned, there is a general appearance of justice and candour running through his arguments. Yet I cannot but take notice of one passage, wherein has not done the reverend doctor *Waterland* the same justice, in a citation, pages 12, and 153. where he twice represents him as declaring, that "the doctrine of the trinity is thoroughly understood but by few in comparison," whereas that learned author had only asserted, that "the controversy of the trinity is thoroughly understood but by few in comparison," which makes a great difference in the sense: for multitudes of the vulgar rank of mankind may understand the doctrine of the trinity, sufficient for their own salvation, while the learned controversies that relate to it are much unknown by them.

I own the light I have received from this author in the different turn he hath given to some few of those scriptures which I had brought as proofs of my doctrine, which I must acknowledge carries such a degree of probability, as to weaken the force of my arguments derived from thence; such are *John* iii. 13. *Zech.* xi. 12, 13. and perhaps, one or two more; for I would not willingly pervert one text of scripture from its native and sacred sense, to support any article of my faith.



I take this opportunity here also; together with my thanks to this author, to acknowledge the goodness of some other friends, who by their obliging letters have made other occasional exceptions to any uncautious sentences which I had used in some part of my treatise; which being written chiefly for private christians, had not all that strict accuracy in it that controversy required. But these expressions I shall endeavour to correct in the next edition, which my booksellers tell me will be quickly wanted.

With regard to the business of charity, which I mentioned before, as well as the matters of argument for the defence of the deity of our blessed Saviour, I have other dissertations lying by me, which give some general solutions to the chief scriptural difficulties in this controversy, and make it appear that the common doctrine of the trinity stands firm upon the greatest part of those scriptural proofs by which I have endeavoured to support it. And I hope it shall also be sufficiently proved, that the zealous contenders for this doctrine are not always so deficient in their charity as they are too often represented.

I know there are some things will be objected to these dissertations, viz.

Objection I. Since I have several more discourses by me already finished, it will be naturally demanded, "Why I have not published them at once? Why I have given the world at present only these three?" To this I answer, That these three essays enter not so far into the particular distinctions between the sacred persons, but chiefly maintain their communion in the same godhead: I thought therefore it was much more proper to send these abroad first; hoping that if my labours of this kind find acceptance among my friends, I might then be better encouraged to publish the rest in a few months time; in some of which I found myself constrained to speak more largely, and particularly of the "distinction of persons in the sacred trinity."

But on the other hand, if the general doctrine of the communion of *Christ* in the deity; or the union of two natures in one person, or divine worship paid to *Christ* the mediator, cannot be supported, our particular modes of explaining the distinction of the divine persons are all destroyed and rendered useless.

Objection II. It will be censured as a fault by many, "that I repeat the same things." Truly the reason is, because these essays were written at distant times: And besides, in such a controversy it is necessary sometimes to set the same things before the view of the reader, which would have but little force, or perhaps be forgotten, if they were only intermingled with other parts of the controversy, and by that means were out of sight.

Objection III. Some will make it a matter of offence and scandal, that "I do not write with that full assurance of every thing as others would do in the like case." To this I answer, That since the studies of these last years I think I am established afresh in the belief of the deity of *Christ*, and the blessed Spirit, and assured of it upon sufficient grounds, that they are one with the Father in godhead, though they are represented in scripture as distinct persons. But as to the various particular explications of this doctrine, and incidental arguments that attend it, I desire to believe and to write with a humble consciousness of my own ignorance, and to give my assent but in proportion to the degrees of light and evidence. I am persuaded, if every man would proportion his assent by the same rule, much of our modern assurance would be abated; we should have but few dogmatists amongst us, even in some important doctrines; and by this method perhaps the most positive and confident assertors of their own opinions would become the most doubtful and modest of all men.

Besides,

Besides, when I consult the scripture, or human writers, on so sublime a subject, I do not come with all my opinions fixed and determined, but I read in order to receive further light, and therefore I would write as one who may be mistaken, and who is honestly seeking truth. I know the weakness of human understanding, and how easily we are led into error. I have often seen occasion to retract my former sentiments, and correct them by further discoveries; and I esteem a modest and cautious manner of speech, in most of the controverted points, to be one excellence of a fallible writer, and retraction of an error to be yet a superior attainment: And though this is made sometimes a matter of scoff among vulgar souls, it is always a honour among the wise.

Objection IV. "Some think, that I do not write with indignation and zeal enough, and that I treat the adversaries of the divinity of *Christ* with too much gentleness for any man who professes to be a friend to that sacred article, and a lover of the blessed Saviour."

I might make several replies to such an objection. As,

Answer I. If my blessed Saviour has loved his own enemies so as to die for them, and to intreat them in the gentlest manner to be reconciled to God the Father by him, I persuade myself he will never be angry with me, if I shew so much love to those who dishonour him, as to intreat them in a gentle manner, after his example, to be reconciled to God their Saviour, to confess his sublime character, and to pay him divine honours.

Answer II. I would not willingly call every man an enemy to *Christ*, who lies under some doubts of his supreme godhead. My charity inclines me to believe that some of them, both read their bibles carefully, and pray daily for divine instruction to lead them into all truth: That they honour and adore that glorious person whom they believe to be the brightness of his Father's glory, and by whom he created the worlds, who condescended to take a human body, and to die for sinners; and that they trust in him, and love him above all things, beside God the Father, though perhaps some culpable prejudice may cleave to their minds, whereby they are prevented from receiving that light and evidence of his divine nature, which, in my opinion, shines clearly in the word of God: And I cannot but hope, that such humble and sincere enquirers will not miss any of the necessary articles of faith.

Answer III. I am well assured that the wisdom which comes from above is first pure, and then peaceable; that we are required in the gospel not to call for fire from heaven, even upon such *samaritans* who will not receive *Christ* at all, but with all meekness to instruct those that oppose themselves, that they may be recovered out of any dangerous snares. The methods in which divine controversy has generally been written, have proved fatal to religion, and utterly improper to promote the truth. When we rail we set our opponents a railing too; and in such a frame of spirit, we are neither fit to instruct others, nor are they fit to receive instruction. The wrath of man works not the righteousness of God, nor the knowledge of *Christ*. These angry fits of zeal do but awaken the disorderly passions of men, and tempt them to resist every argument that comes armed with such assumed sovereignty and fire. It is God only who has a right and a power to convince the obstinate by a spirit of burning: He may clothe an angel in flame, or inspire a prophet to be the minister of his shining vengeance, but I had rather be made a humble messenger of his light and love. The great God can send conviction in the language of death and ruin, but he does not exert this power till gentler methods have been tried in vain.



Besides, in contests and debates among men, much darkness is consistent with vehement heat. These qualities are found in greatest perfection in the nether world; and sometimes on earth the fiercest heat has the deepest darkness attending it. Light itself, when joined with noise and fire, has not the most happy influence to improve and refine the mind. A flash of lightening rather affrights than guides us: The voice of thunder carries more terror than instruction in it: The soul bars up all the avenues of it's understanding against truth itself, when it demands entrance by such human methods of violence. It is only the gentle approaches of truth, like the morning light, which open the windows of the soul, and make it willing to receive all further discoveries. I add in the last place,

Answer IV. That if by such methods as these I shall be so far honoured of God, as to recover any who have departed from their former principles, or establish those who doubt, I am well assured that my blessed Lord will esteem it as a better service done for himself, than if I had guarded his sacred doctrines by scattering all the terrors of hell round about them, than if I had thundered out damnation against disbelievers, and awakened the rage of every gainsayer without the least hope of conviction. There was once a "great and strong wind that rent the mountains, and brake the rocks in pieces, after the wind an earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire, in the earthquake, or in the wind; then a still small voice was heard; God was in that voice, and visited his prophet who was jealous for the Lord of hosts." 1 Kings xix. 11—13.

I conclude the preface with one request to my readers of every kind, whether *arian* or *athanasian*; and that is, that they would not make all their former, nor their present opinions an everlasting standard of truth, and a test whereby to judge of every thing they read: And that they would not suddenly pronounce nonsense or heresy upon every sentence that differs from their former belief.

I entreat them on one side, that they would search and examine honestly, whether it be not possible that such a sublime and mysterious doctrine as the deity of *Christ*, may be true, when some of the more indefensible appendages of it are lopped off; which doctrine, when mingled with these appendages, was very hard to be believed or defended: And on the other hand, I desire that my readers would consider impartially, whether so difficult a doctrine as this of the sacred trinity may not be better defended in itself, and more effectually let into the mind of disbelievers, by granting those things which seem to be the obvious sense of some scriptures, and removing other things which scripture does not assert, and which were some of the chief bars against their belief of it.

In the mean time, while we all employ a diligent and impartial search after these sacred truths, and are seeking to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of *Christ Jesus* our Lord, let us with daily and importunate requests implore the assistances of the blessed Spirit, since our Saviour has promised to send him as a guide into those very truths which relate to himself. *John* xvi. 14. "He shall glorify me: For he shall receive of mine and shew it unto you."

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# DISSERTATION I.

## The *Arian* invited to the orthodox Faith:

OR,

A plain and easy method to lead such as deny the proper deity of *Christ*, into the belief of that great article.

### S E C T I O N I.

WHEN christians are divided in their sentiments, and break out into party quarrels, the names of their opinions will be tossed to and fro, as terms of reproach and scandal. *Arian* is made a word of infamy, and orthodox on the other hand is turned into a jest, a matter of mere ridicule. But I have no inclination either to rail or laugh; nor would I use one of these words in a reproachful sense, nor the other in a ridiculous one; and therefore it is proper that I should here explain my meaning, that wheresoever these words occur in the following papers, the reader may have just ideas of them.

I do not love to affix such names to any party of men as they themselves utterly disown: This has a tendency to irritate the spirits of those whom we design to enlighten, and reduce to the faith and profession of our own sentiments, and therefore it should be avoided as much as we can. Yet it often so happens in the affairs of mankind, that it is hardly possible to describe the followers of any particular sect or opinion, when it is necessary to speak of them, without using the same names which the world generally gives them: And the world generally gives them the name of those who have been the most famous assertors or professors of such kind of doctrines.

As it is therefore my design in the present essay to address those who may have entertained scruples or doubts about this great doctrine of the "deity of *Christ*," or have departed from their former principles, I would treat them with all gentleness: And I freely declare, that I believe the name of *Arian* hath been often of late given to such as have by no means deserved it, and are no abettors of the old principles of *Arians*.

An ancient *Arian* is one who believes the Son and holy Spirit to be mere creatures: He believes our Lord *Jesus Christ* to be a glorious person, but still as much inferior to



to the true and eternal God, as a creature differs from the Creator; for he believes his human soul, or that spirit which supplies the place of it, to be his highest or divinest nature, and that it was produced by the power and arbitrary will of God the Father, some time before the world was made, and thus he believes it to be properly a creature, utterly denying the true and proper godhead of *Christ*; yet he owns him to be sometimes called God in scripture, on the account of his great likeness to God, his acting in the name of God, and his government of the world. And thus by changing and diminishing the idea of the word God, and reducing it to an inferior sense, he allows an inferior godhead to belong to *Christ*. He believes also this glorious spirit did take upon him a human body, was born of the virgin *Mary*, and thus became a complete man, in the fulness of time appointed by the Father. This is usually represented as the general sense of the ancient followers of *Arius*.

Now it is evident that the modern disbelievers of the divinity of *Christ*, or most of them at least, have refined the ancient doctrines of *Arius*, and thereby, perhaps, rendered their sentiments more defensible, at least in their own opinion: But if through divine assistance I shall become so happy as to lead any that believe even these ancient *arian* principles, into the doctrine of the divinity of *Christ*, by natural and easy steps, I would fain persuade my self that some of the moderns will not shut their eyes against the evidence of light, nor resist the force of such attraction, but yield to it with greater ease.

But if this expectation be too presuming, and no disbeliever be recovered to the common faith of the deity of *Christ*, yet I must indulge my hope thus far at least, that some wavering doubtful, and unsettled christians may be established in their faith by some of these attempts.

Before I proceed, it is necessary also that I should tell what I mean by the word "orthodoxy." For several centuries past, this word has been applied to that explication of the doctrine of the trinity, which supposes the divine nature to be but one numerical or individual essence or being; and that this essence is the same in the Father, the Word, and the Spirit. That these three are so far distinct as to lay a foundation for the scripture to speak of them in a personal manner, as I, Thou, and He; and upon this account they are called three persons: But that they are not so distinct as to have three distinct consciousnesses, for they are only supposed to be three incomprehensible differences in one and the same numerical essence of God, or in one and the same individual spirit. That in the person of *Christ* two distinct natures are united, God and man; whence it comes to pass that some proper divine characters, and some human, are attributed to the same person.

Now I ask leave to try whether it is not possible to lead one who has favoured the *arian* sentiments toward a belief of the chief parts of this doctrine, which for some ages past has obtained the name of orthodoxy, though I confess there are some other parts of it which are not so defensible.

## S E C T I O N II.

**T**HE method which I shall pursue in my present attempt, is to propose these following queries.

Query I. Is it not a principle of natural religion, and universally confirmed by reason and scripture, that there is but one God, one true and living God, one eternal

nal and almighty Creator and supreme governor of all things, one infinite being, who is the first cause and last end of all?

Query II. Have you not always believed this God to be one Spirit, one single spirit, one conscious mind, and not made up of two or three conscious minds or spirits? Nor am I going to lead you into any other idea of the great and blessed God, or to give you any occasion to imagine that we believe two or three Gods.

Query III. Has not this great and blessed God assumed to himself in his word some peculiar names, titles, characters and prerogatives, whereby he will distinguish himself from every thing which is beside and beneath him, that he might give his people a distinct knowledge of himself, and secure them from the danger of paying divine honours to any thing that is not God? See "christian doctrine of the trinity," Propositions iv. v. vi.

Query IV. Are not *Yehovah*, the true God, the great God, the mighty God, and God blessed for ever, the God of *Abraham*, the Lord of hosts, the king of kings, the Lord of Lords, the first and the last, some of these distinguishing names and titles of God?

Are not the searching of the heart of man, omnipresence, omnipotence, and the works of creation, and the conservation of all things, some of these divine characters or prerogatives? See "christian doctrine," Propositions vii, viii. which propositions, with the greatest part of their explication, may be vindicated against all reasonable objections.

Let it be observed, that the enquiry here is not, how far, or in what degree some of these titles, characters, powers, and operations may possibly belong to an exalted creature, in the abstracted nature of things, or by the favour of God? But whether God in his word has not made these titles, operations, and characters, his own appropriate prerogatives, to distinguish himself from inferior beings? And has he not expressed himself with a divine solicitude and sacred jealousy in this matter, that *Yehovah* is his name, and he will not give his glory to another?

Query V. Are not these names, titles, and prerogatives ascribed to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, in several places of scripture, in such a manner as would naturally lead the unlearned and common christian into a belief that they are the very same characters whereby the great and blessed God has distinguished himself? Are they not often attributed to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, without any such evident limitations or restrictions as to distinguish them from the prerogatives of the one true God?

Nay, let me add further, are they not expressed in such a manner, and so applied to *Christ*, that would lead even the wise, the learned, and the cautious reader, into the same sentiments, if he had not imbibed some other opinion, and upon that account endeavoured to evade this sense? See "christian doctrine of the trinity," Propositions viii. and ix. The multitudes of pious christians, learned and unlearned, that in all ages of the church have honestly read their bibles, and have fallen into this sentiment of things, after the strictest search to find the truth, are a sufficient answer to this query, and a proof of the affirmative.

Query VI. Is here not then the appearance of a very considerable difficulty, how to reconcile these ascriptions of divine titles and prerogatives both to God the Father and to *Jesus Christ*, without breaking in upon the sacred doctrine of the unity of God, which is established both by reason and scripture? And how shall this difficulty be removed, but by a consultation of those sacred writings wherein we find the same divine characters ascribed both to *Christ* and to the Father.

Query VII. Does not the scripture give us a very natural and evident solution of this difficulty, when it assures us that there is a most peculiar and intimate union, or oneness,



oneness, between the great God and his Son *Jesus Christ*? *Col. ii. 9.* "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily." *John x. 30.* "I and my Father are one." *John xiv. 10.* "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me." *John xiv. 9.* "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." *John xiv. 10.* "I speak not of my self,—the Father that dwelleth in me doeth the works." *1 John v. 7.* "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one." *Exod. xxiii. 20.* "I will send an angel before thee, beware of him, provoke him not, &c. for my name is in him."

Query VIII. Are there not other scriptures that express evidently both a divine and a human nature in our Lord *Jesus*; as *Rom. ix. 5.* "*Christ* of the seed of *David* after the flesh, and yet he is over all God blessed for ever?" *1 Tim. iii. 16.* "God manifest in the flesh, who was seen of angels, and received up into glory." *Rev. xxii. 13, 16.* "The beginning and the end, the first and the last, the root and the offspring of *David*." *John i. 1, 14.* "The Word, who was with God, and who was God, was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

Query IX. May there not be such a close and intimate union or oneness between God and a creature, as that the actions and characters of either of them may be attributed to the whole compound being? And may not this lay a foundation for such divine expressions concerning *Christ*, viz. That he is *Jehovah*, the great God, over all God blessed for ever; *Jesus Christ* the same yesterday, to day, and for ever; and let all the angels of God worship him, which are characters belonging to the true God; And yet concerning this same person *Jesus Christ*, is it not said also, he eat, drank, slept, walked, groaned and died, which are characters belonging to man?

Query X. May not this intimate union or oneness between God and a creature, give occasion for the actions and properties of the man to be attributed to God? And may we not this way account for such expressions as these, *Acts xx. 28.* "God hath purchased the church with his own blood." *1 John iii. 16.* "God laid down his life for us. God manifest in the flesh, was received up into glory." *1 Tim. iii. 16?*

Note, This figure of speech, whereby the peculiar attributes of one nature are ascribed to another, is called a communication of properties: And it is usual in all languages, and in all nations, when two distinct beings, are united into one common principle of action. So we say of a wise woman, she is a prudent body; so of a drunkard, that he is a thirsty soul: We often call a witty or skilful man, an ingenious headpiece, and we give the name of a sleepy soul to a sluggard; because soul and body being united compose a man, therefore some property of body is oftentimes attributed to the soul, and some property of soul attributed to the body.

Query XI. Is not this a more natural, more easy, and more scriptural method of accounting for the attribution of divine names and properties to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, than for us to take the peculiar and distinguishing names, titles, characters and properties of godhead which are applied to *Christ*, and sink them to a diminutive and inferior sense, and thus apply them to the man *Christ Jesus*? Would not every reader, even a *Turk* or an *Indian*\*, readily believe these names and characters to be incommunicably divine, and appropriate only to the great God, if they did not read them applied also to *Jesus Christ*? And would they not rather chuse to account for this

\* I will allow the author of the "sober appeal to a *Turk* or an *Indian*," to have given as fair a gloss to his construction of those scriptures in another sense, as any writer has done: But in several places it is evident with how much difficulty and hardship those texts are strained to any other meaning than what the *trinitarian* writers have generally given them. Where the gloss of that author is fairest, and most likely to prevail on readers, it shall be considered in some future papers, if the present essays are well received by the world.

this application of them by the personal union of the man *Jesus Christ* to the divine nature, than by denying these characters to be appropriate to God? Is it not more rational and more scriptural to suppose the man *Christ*, by his union to God, capable of these names and characters in their sublime and exalted sense, than to run counter to so many places of scripture, which at least seem to appropriate these names and characters to God.

Query XII. Does it not tend to take away the distinction betwixt God and his creatures, which ought always to be sacred and inviolable, if we make such names and characters as *Jehovah*, the great, the mighty, the blessed God, the Creator, the preserver of all things, and the object of worship, to be attributed and applied to any thing that is not God? Or if we sink them into a low and diminutive sense, in order to make such an application of them? Is a mere distant resemblance of God in some of his properties, or a being appointed under God a deputy governor of the world, a sufficient reason to have all these glorious and incommunicable divine titles, characters, and worship attributed to a mere creature?

Query XIII. Would not such an attribution of divine names, titles and characters, to a mere creature, have a plain and strong tendency to introduce a polytheism and idolatry, too near akin to that which is often condemned among the heathens, viz. The owning and worshipping heroes, departed souls, inferior and superior gods? Would it not have an apparent aspect of God's giving his name, and his glory to another, contrary to *Isa.* xlii. 8. And has it not a manifest and dangerous appearance of breaking the first commandment, which says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me?" Is not *Christ Jesus* in the *arian* scheme represented as another and an inferior god? Another and an inferior object of worship? Nor do I see how it is possible, upon that hypothesis, to answer what the learned doctor *Waterland* has urged so often, and so successfully against his opponents, viz. That the *arian* writers, by their hypothesis, introduce more gods than one.

Query XIV. As the holy scripture leads us into this method of solving the proposed difficulty, of both divine and human properties ascribed to *Christ*, so does not reason it self dictate and confirm the same? Since we find two distinct and seemingly inconsistent properties ascribed to the person of *Christ*, viz. divine and human, is it not far better to suppose the single subjects of these properties united into one compound subject, viz. God and man? And then each single subject may keep its own properties. Is not this easier than to join two inconsistent properties in the same single subject, which scripture doth neither necessitate, nor encourage, and philosophy and reason will not allow?

Query XV. Since the modern refiners of the *arian* scheme have granted, that there is a peculiar, strict and perfect union and communion, between the Father and the Son, and cannot deny, but that several of the texts I have cited may have a secret reference to some mysterious, incomprehensible instances of union and communion between them, see doctor *Clarke's* "scripture doctrine of the trinity," part the first, number 594 and 600. Where is the inconvenience, or difficulty, of allowing this to be called a personal union, whereby what is proper to God may be attributed to *Christ*, and what is proper to the man *Christ* may be attributed to God; and what is proper to either part of the compound person may be applied to the whole? Thus God manifest in the flesh was seen of angels, and ascended to heaven, may signify the same, as that *Jesus Christ*, or the man united to godhead, was seen of angels, and ascended to heaven." 1 *Tim.* iii. 16.



## S E C T I O N III.

**S**UPPOSE a person, who had before indulged the *arian* error, and denied the proper divinity of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, should by these steps of enquiry be led on thus far, to believe that *Christ* is called God, *Jehovah*, the great God, and blessed God, in the true, proper, and exalted sense, he might be yet led farther onward into this doctrine, and quickly learn how to explain, in clear ideas, several other propositions which are asserted and maintained in the orthodox scheme, that is, in the common explication of the trinity: viz. how the Son of God may be also God of one substance, power and eternity, or of the same substance with the Father, and in some sense equal with him in power and glory. And it may be explained also by this means, how *Christ* becomes the Son of God by an ineffable communication of the divine nature to him from the Father, and thus he may be the image of the invisible God, and the express image of his Father's person; thus also all the divine characters which are ascribed to *Christ* in the new testament, may be properly said to be derived from the Father. Observe the following method.

1. If the essence of God which is in the Father, and in the Son *Jesus Christ*, be the same numerical essence\*, then it is evident that the Son hath the same substance with the Father.

2. If the perfections that belong to that divine essence are equal, or the same in the Father and in the Son, then there is a sense wherein the Father and Son may be said to be equal in power and glory; though the Father may be properly said to have them originally, and the Son by communication.

3. The divine nature, or deity, may be said to be communicated to *Jesus Christ* the Son, by the Father's uniting the human nature of *Christ* to his own godhead, or to some divine power or principle of agency represented personally, or by God's actual assuming the man *Christ Jesus*, his Son, into a personal union with himself, or his own infinite wisdom, which act of uniting the godhead to the man *Christ Jesus* may be called a communication of the divine nature to the Son ||.

4. And

\* It is generally granted by the greatest and best trinitarian writers, that supposing we believe the Father, Son and Spirit, to be really, truly and properly, one God, the particular manner of explaining the internal distinctions in the divine essence is of much less importance. Upon this concession I take leave to say, that though the doctrine of the same numerical essence belonging to the sacred three, has been opposed by some learned and pious writers, yet this is the opinion which is certainly most consonant to the light of nature, which has been for many centuries past counted the orthodox doctrine, and which seems most agreeable to the unity of God, where that is represented in scripture, and therefore I rather incline to believe it: And I think the personal representations of the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit, may be explained in a full consistency therewith, as I shall endeavour to shew hereafter.

Here let it be noted also, that the divine nature of *Christ* is sometimes taken inadequately for the eternal word or wisdom of God, sometimes adequately for God, exerting or acting by his eternal word or wisdom, or godhead under the special idea of wisdom. Now it is chiefly in this latter sense that I speak of the godhead of *Christ* in these three dissertations.

|| Though it has been an opinion generally received, that the sonship of *Christ* belongs to his divine nature, supposing it to be really derived from the Father by eternal generation, yet the scripture does not where assert this doctrine, but it is drawn only by supposed consequences: And there are many zealous trinitarians, and learned writers in our day, who suppose no derivation of one person from another in pure godhead, lest it infer some inferiority in the person derived; and therefore they explain *Christ's* Sonship rather

4. And perhaps, this is one way whereby *Christ* becomes the Son of God; nor is it utterly improper to apply the text here, *Psal. ii. 7.* "I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my son this day have I begotten thee." *Christ* becomes the Son of God, and may be said to be begotten of the Father by a divine decree or appointment. And thus, "as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself," *John v. 26.* That is, he hath given the favour of union with the divine nature to the man *Christ Jesus*; and to have life in himself is one property of the divine nature\*, which now exists in the complex person.

5. Thus *Jesus Christ*, the Son of God, becomes the most perfect image of the invisible God, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. The powers and perfections with which the man *Jesus* is invested, by the indwelling and united godhead, would render him a most illustrious image of the Father, if there were no superior sense in which also he were the express image of God; for there is no being through which the godhead shines in all its perfections with such brightness, such express likeness, and such glory as in the person of *Jesus Christ*," *2 Cor. iv. 6.*

6. Yet farther, if we can receive the doctrine of the pre-existence of *Christ's* human soul, which seems to be the most obvious and natural sense of many scriptures, if we can believe that it was formed the first of creatures before the foundation of the world, and was present with God in the beginning of all things, which is no hard matter for an *arian* to grant, then we also justly believe this union between God and man to have begun before the world was, in some unknown moment of God's own eternity: For when the human soul of *Christ* was first brought into existence, it might be united in that moment to the divine nature.

Thus *Christ* was, in this sense also, the first-born of every creature. For his complex person had a being before the creation was formed; and perhaps, this may be the best way of expounding the doctrine of the most primitive fathers concerning the ante-mundane generation of *Christ*, that is, his becoming the Son of God in a new manner just before the world was made. See "the fourth dissertation on the *Logos*."

According to this view of things, it is easy to understand how he had some hand in the creation as God-man §, that is, as *Jesus Christ*, by whom "God created all things," *Eph. iii. 9.* How all "things were created by him, and for him, and by him all things consist," *Col. i. 16.* "And he upholds all things by the word of his power," *Heb. i. 3.* For he was God-man from the beginning of his existence as man. Thus divine perfections always belonged to him; his godhead was co-essential and co-eternal with the godhead of the Father, for it was the same divine essence; and his person as God-man existed before the foundation of the world.

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rather to signify the peculiar derivation of his soul and body from God the Father, or his being constituted the *Messiah* by the decree and appointment of God; and doctor *Thomas Goodwin* also supposes, that the union of the man *Jesus* to the divine nature is one reason why he is called the Son of God. "It was by the personal union that God bestowed on the man *Jesus* the glory of being his Son," Volume II. Book 3. Page. 146.

\* This is not so bold a thought as doctor *Goodwin* has on this text, when he says, "It is one attribute of *Christ* as he is God-man, yea, as he is man taken up into that union, to have life independently in himself, even as God the Father hath." Volume II. Book 3. Page 193.

§ Doctor *Thomas Goodwin* does at large maintain and prove, that *Christ*, as God-man, created all things, and under this character he was the instrument by which God created the world. "See his discourse of the knowledge of God and *Christ*." Book 3. Chapter 10, 11, 12. Page 178, 190.



These glorious attributions, by this means, appear to have a just foundation in the divine and human natures of *Christ* united, even without entering into any of the particular and internal distinctions, and personalities which belong to the divine essence itself, and which are more abstruse and incomprehensible; and therefore they are not the first and most necessary things to be taught or learned in the doctrine of the deity of *Christ*.

Lastly, The human soul of *Christ* being thus antiently united to the divine nature, did about seventeen hundred years ago, assume a body that was prepared for it by the Father through the peculiar operation of the holy Spirit. Upon this account sometimes *Christ*, or the Son of God, is said to come in the flesh; at other times God himself is represented as manifest in the flesh; some expressions referring chiefly to the godhead, others to God-man, or the soul of *Christ* in antient union with his divine nature.

#### S E C T I O N IV.

NOW, if by such methods of reasoning a disbeliever of the proper divinity of *Christ* shall be induced to believe his true godhead, by virtue of such a personal union between the man *Christ Jesus* and the divine nature, I cannot but think there is a just foundation laid for a ready belief of all the glorious consequent doctrines of the priesthood and kingdom of *Christ*; and of the proper and perfect satisfaction of *Christ* offered to the infinite majesty of heaven for all the infinite offences of sinful men. Our blessed Saviour, by this doctrine, is furnished with all those divine powers and perfections that are requisite for his exaltation to the government over all things, since in his person there is the true and eternal godhead united to the man *Jesus*: And he becomes hereby the proper object of divine worship, considered in his person as God-man. And whosoever shall believe and confess this doctrine, has, in my opinion, a sufficient degree of orthodoxy in this point, to be received into any christian church, although he may have some scruples or difficulties remaining upon his mind, about some opinions relating to other parts of the doctrine of the trinity.

The most natural and pressing objection which here would arise in the mind is this, "If the divine nature, or true God, be but one single conscious mind or spirit, and this spirit be united to human nature, or the man *Jesus*, then does not God the Father seem to be incarnate? Is there not too great an approach made to that doctrine which was called the heresy of the *Sabellians*, or the *Patri-passians*, viz. That God the Father took flesh, suffered, died, and rose again, and ascended to heaven?" To this I answer,

Answer I. If the sonship of *Christ* be not referred to his divine nature, but rather to the extraordinary production of his human nature, or to it's personal union with the godhead, or to his office as *Messiah*, then the name of Father will not import any internal real distinction in the divine nature or essence \*, but rather it imports a honourable

\* That the notions of paternity and sonship are not necessary internal distinctions of the divine essence, but rather oeconomical, external and relative, seems to be the sense of some learned trinitarians. "Though these three are in the holy scriptures spoken of under the names of Father, Son, and holy Ghost, and as begetting, begotten and proceeding; yet still we leave it to those who are wiser, or at least more bold and daring than we, to say, that this does, and to shew afterwards how it does relate to the divine essence: For we have no notion of a greater or lesser in the godhead." See "doctrine of the blessed trinity by some London ministers," page 21.

honourable title or character which the great God assumes, upon the account of his being the origin of all things, or his being the Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ* as man, or his constituting him God-man and mediator.

The Father is also a proper name which belongs to God, considered as sustaining the character of prime agent in all the works of creation, providence, government, and salvation. But when this godhead is considered in it's union to a man, and as part of the complex person, then it does not assume to itself these supreme characters, nor the title of Father in the trinity; and being joined to the man *Christ Jesus*, it may receive those characters of office and inferiority which belong to a mediator, as well as it renders the person of *Christ* God-man fit to sustain these offices.

In this view, although *Christ Jesus* the Son be united to the same godhead, which is the very essence and nature of the Father, yet it cannot be said properly, that he is personally united to the Father, because this union to human nature, though it does not diminish any thing of the divine perfections, yet it alters the relative titles and characters that belong to God, as he appears the Father of all things, the sovereign majesty, the prime almighty Creator, and supreme governor of heaven and earth.

The similitude which I have used in the "christian doctrine of the trinity," Proposition XVIII. would set this in a fair light, if I may repeat part of it again, viz. Suppose a king should send an ambassador extraordinary to a foreign country; and suppose the soul of the king himself, or one of his intellectual powers, could be so united also to the body, or person, of the ambassador, as to animate, actuate and move him, and become, as it were, one person with him: then the soul of the king himself might be said to sustain both his own character as king, and the inferior character of the ambassador, and fulfil both those offices under a distinct sort of personality, or in two distinct persons.

Thus we may apprehend, how God the Father, the king of heaven, sent down his Son, a distinct person, in whom the same godhead dwells, as an ambassador extraordinary, to earth: And thus this eternal godhead being the same in the Father and Son, sustains the superior character of a sovereign king, in the person of the Father, and may be said also to sustain the inferior character of an ambassador, and to fulfil that office in the person of the Son.

We must not expect human similes should be entire and perfect images of things divine: If they give us some illustration of sacred mysteries it is sufficient.

The holy scripture seems to favour this representation when it describes the godhead, or sometimes even the Father, as subsisting in the man *Christ*, and executing all his three offices of a prophet, priest, and king, in and by the human nature.

1. A prophet. *John* xiv. 10. "The words I speak to you I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works," that is, it is the same God, who is sometimes called Father, that speaks in me, and confirms the words by miraculous works.

2. A priest. *2 Cor.* v. 19. "God was in *Christ* reconciling the world to himself," that is, God in the person of *Christ* was the reconciler of the world to himself in the person of the Father.

3. A king, or lawgiver. *1 Thess.* v. 18. "In every thing give thanks, for this is the will, or command, of God in *Christ* concerning you." God in *Christ* is our commander.

Thus it is the same God, who at other times sustains the person of the Father, dwelling personally in the man *Jesus* his Son, who assists him in all the works of mediation, so far that it may be said God performs them; and thus "God laid down his  
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life for us," 1 *John* iii. 16. and "God redeemed the church with his own blood," *Acts* xx. 28. It is that "God who was manifest in the flesh," 1 *Tim.* iii. 16.

Thus you see, how far we may go toward the solution of this difficulty, before we come to distinguish three persons in the very essence of God. And I cannot avoid remarking, that all these thoughts put together do naturally lead one rather to incline to this opinion, that the godhead of the Father and of the Son, are numerically one and the same godhead, however internally and externally distinguished by personal subsistences and relative properties. And this is the constant idea that our protestant divines abroad and at home have given us of the deity of *Christ*, viz. as the same numerical godhead which is in the Father.

Answer II. But, perhaps, this will not be thought sufficient entirely to answer and remove the difficulty: I add therefore, that if we suppose there may be some such, or greater distinctions in the divine nature it self, or in God the infinite spirit, as are between the understanding and will in the soul of man, which is a finite spirit, I have shewn very particularly in another discourse, how one of these divine powers, or differences in the divine nature, may be united to man in such a sense as the other cannot so properly be said to be united to him; and for this I must desire the reader's patience, till I see whether the world will encourage further publications on this subject.

## C O N C L U S I O N.

**L**EST I should be exposed to the censure of my zealous friends, for not speaking so largely, fully and particularly, in this dissertation, concerning the three sacred persons in the trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit, as I have done elsewhere, I entreat them to consider the design of this discourse, which is not to explain this article at large, but merely to lead an *arian*, by soft and easy steps, into a belief of the divinity of *Christ*: And therefore it was necessary that I should not break in upon his understanding all at once, and attempt to assault and batter down all his old sentiments; but that I should explain the doctrine in as near a correspondency to his former sentiments as truth would permit, and represent the deity of *Christ*, and the union of the two natures in one person, in such a manner as might give the least disgust and offence to one of *arian* principles\*, provided always, that I assert nothing but what is agreeable to scripture, though I do not at once publish the whole of that doctrine in all its varieties. It would be a good beginning to proceed thus far; time, and study of the scripture, with divine instructions, may lead him on to farther knowledge, and a more complete agreement with our best writers, so far as they agree with the word of God.

Our blessed Saviour bore with the prejudices of his own disciples for a season; he had many other things to say of them, even at the end of his life, "but they could not bear them yet," *John* xvi. 12. And the blessed apostles bore with the prejudices of the *jews* many years, and did not all at once beat down their whole scheme of *moisic* principles. When St. Paul taught the *Corinthians*, he "fed them with milk and

\* That great defender of the divinity of *Christ*, doctor *Waterland*, will bear me out in this manner of writing, for he freely declares, "He does not find fault with the fathers for adapting their style sometimes to pagans, but commends them rather for doing it in some cases, as doing what was proper." See his farther vindication of *Christ's* divinity," &c. page 17. And St. Paul practises the same thing, and becomes all things to all men, even to *jews* and heathens, that by all means he may save some, 1 *Cor.* ix. 22.

and not with meat, for they were not able to bear it," 1 Cor. iii. 2. And when he found the *Hebrews* backward to hear, he reserved, till afterwards, the many things which he had to say, and which were hard to be uttered," *Heb.* v. 11, 12.

"The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves," 2 Tim. ii. 24. as well knowing, that it is by short and gentle steps, and by slow degrees, that human nature is capable of dropping its former prejudices, parting with any of its old opinions, and receiving further light. I am well persuaded, that disputes regulated by christian love, and under the conduct of sacred charity, are in their own nature most proper to rectify the unwilling mistakes of men; and if ever the Spirit of God condescend to bless any controversial writings for the conviction of those that are in error it is the soft and gentle method of argument that stands fairest to receive such divine influences.

## DISSERTATION II.

### God and man united in the person of *Christ*.

AS it is evident throughout all the scripture, so it is agreed on all hands, that our blessed Saviour *Jesus Christ* is a proper person, and is so described in the word of God. He has all the peculiar characters of personality belonging to him; he is a distinct intelligent agent; and the personal pronouns, I, thou, and he, are applied to him with great frequency in the holy writings.

It is also as clear in it self, and agreed upon without controversy on all sides, that he has the true and proper characters, attributes, actions and passions of man attributed to him: The history of his life and death bear witness to this in all the evangelists.

It is also very evident to me, and has appeared so to almost all the christian church, in the several ages of it, that the names, titles, peculiar properties, and incommunicable prerogatives of God, are given to this glorious person in the scriptures both of the old and new testament.

It is very hard, if not impossible, for us to give any tolerable account, how and why the peculiar and appropriate characters both of God and of man, in so many places, and in such variety of expressions, should be given to the same person, *Jesus Christ*, unless we suppose the two distinct natures of God and of man, united to make up one complex, or compound principle of action and passion, that is, to make up one person.

The holy scripture lays an evident foundation for this. *Christ* is plainly described in several of the sacred writings as God and man, united to make up one person, one complex principle of action and passion. He is often called God, and he is often called a man, both in the old and new testament; and sometimes both these natures are represented together, *Col.* ii. 9. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily." *Rom.* ix. 5. *Christ* of the seed of *David* after the flesh, and yet he is over all, God



God blessed for ever." 1 Tim. iii. 16. "God manifest in the flesh, who was seen of angels, received up into glory." Rev. xxii. 13, 16. "The beginning and the end, the first and the last, the root and the offspring of David." John i. 1, 14. "The Word who was with God, and who was God, was made flesh and dwelt among us." It is upon the account of this union that both human and divine properties and characters are attributed to him in the bible.

In opposition to this it has been objected, "That in the passages of scripture mentioned in my book of the 'christian doctrine of the trinity,' there is not the least hint of two intelligent agents united in one person." "Sober appeal," page 144.

Answer. I would let the reader judge, whether in the passages which are there mentioned, page 468. as well as in the texts I have now cited, there is not much more than a mere hint of two such intelligent agents united: It seems to me to be the very language of scripture. But if the two natures of *Christ* were not expressed so plainly as they are, and connected and united in the same texts, yet there are so many different characters applied to *Christ*, which necessarily require two such intelligent agents, one divine, and one human, that the inference appears very obvious and unavoidable, that God and man are united in the person of *Christ*.

Let us look into our selves a little, and enquire, Why we believe man to be a compound being, a creature or person made up of an animal body, and a rational spirit? If we would speak as philosophers, the only reason why we believe it is, because we find some powers, properties and operations belong to us, which cannot belong to a mere animal, or a body of flesh and blood, such as thinking, reasoning, doubting, reflecting, designing, repenting, wishing, &c. And we find also, other ideas, operations, powers and properties, which cannot belong to a spirit, such as, corporeal qualities, dimensions, figure, local motion, tangible, impenetrable and solid substance, eating, drinking, walking: From these things put together, we infer, that since one single nature is not capable of all these properties and operations, therefore the person of man is made up of two distinct natures, viz. a body and a spirit.

Now it is the same diversity of appearances, and the same reasoning, that persuade us to believe the person of *Christ* is made up of two natures, divine and human: And the scripture seems to account for these things the same way.

It is objected again, That "the author of the christian doctrine of the trinity, &c. hath defined the word person, in the common language of men, to signify one single, intelligent, voluntary agent, or principle of action, therefore according to the common sense and language of mankind, here are two persons in *Christ*, as well as two natures; and therefore the author will not say, that he uses the word PERSON here in a sense near akin to the common sense of the word." "Sober appeal," page 140.

Answer, Yes, the author may venture to say, he used the word PERSON here in a sense near akin to it's common sense: And I gave particular notice, page 459. that "though the word person may be fitly used and applied to the doctrine of the trinity, yet we generally suppose it is not to be taken exactly in the same sense, as when we call three men, or three angels, three distinct persons." Now what is not exactly the same sense, may yet be a sense near akin. And if in explaining things divine we use the same word to include a little more, or a little less, than in things human, I think this may be done without blame, since we give notice of this special use of the word, since it is the best word we have, and it is that which comes nearest to the divine or sacred ideas which we would express.

The

The word person, in the common sense of it, signifies one single, intelligent, voluntary agent. But in this theological sense it is supposed to signify one complex, intelligent, voluntary agent; and thus the two natures of *Christ*, divine and human, may be called one person. In order to explain this in a very near approach to the common forms of human language, I would propose the few queries following.

Query I. May not two distinct substances, such as a body and a spirit, be so intimately united, as that the one may act in subordination to the other, and they may both be esteemed, by virtue of this union, as one common subject of action or passion, or one complex principle of doing and suffering? And is not the whole being properly called a person? The common affairs and language of mankind, who are composed of a spirit and a body, answer this query in the affirmative by daily and hourly experience.

Query II. In this instance, of a person composed of two distinct substances, is not that which is done, or sustained by the one or the other substance, attributed to the whole complex being? If the body sleeps or walks, if the soul meditates, loves or fears, do we not say, the man fears, loves, meditates, walks or sleeps?

Query III. In this complex being, or person, are not the actions, passions or characters, of either part of the composition, sometimes attributed to the other in common language? Do we not frequently say, and hear such sentences as these, viz. Poor soul, how pale it looks! That tall thing is very silly. No wise body would have done so. This deformed figure here is a learned man. Some body thought of me. A projecting brain. A thoughtful face. A witty head. A honest heart. A heavy soul. A warm spirit. In each of which expressions some property of body is attributed to the soul, or some property of the soul attributed to the body.

This is what we call a communication of properties, and it is used in the sacred writings as well as human. *Gen. vi. 12.* "All flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth," when in truth it was the spirits of men had corrupted their way. *Prov. xxvii. 7.* "The full soul loatheth the honey comb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet," whereas hunger and fulness are really the properties of the body. *1 Thess. iv. 14.* "Them that sleep in *Jesus* will God bring with him." It is in truth, the body that sleeps, and the soul is brought from heaven with *Christ* to judgment; yet you find, in the language of the apostle, this communication of properties.

Query IV. May not two intelligent agents, or two spirits, one of which is inferior to the other, be so intimately united, as that the one may generally act in entire subordination to the other, and under the influence of the other, so that they shall be esteemed as one common principle of action and passion? And may not what is done or sustained by one spirit, be sometimes attributed to the whole complex being, or sometimes to the other spirit, by reason of their most close and intimate union.

The union of the soul and body to make one complex being, that is, a man, which are two things so utterly distinct in their own natures, gives foundation enough for the union of two spirits into one complex principle of action, since kindred natures may better admit of closer union than natures so exceeding different.

Query V. May not the personal pronouns I, thou, and he, be applied to this whole complex being, especially in every instance wherein the inferior spirit acts in entire subordination to the superior? And as the word person, in common language, signifies one single, intelligent, voluntary agent, so may it not, in this instance, signify one complex, intelligent, voluntary agent? And thus the word person will appear to be used here in a sense near akin to the common ideas of it.



Query VI. Are there not many other words in human language which are used in this manner, that is, to signify either one single substance, or to signify one complex substance, made up of two, or more, single substances united?

We may borrow instances from corporeal unions. When two contiguous houses have mutual communication made between them by proper doors, and are inhabited by one family, they are often called one house: They were two single houses before; now they are one complex house. So two trees may be planted close together, and if they are barked on one side, and bound to each other, by this union they will, as it were, grow into one, and we may with propriety call them one tree: Such instances are also common in twin-fruits, as apples, cherries\*, &c.

We may borrow instances also from political unions. So the parliament of *England*, and the parliament of *Scotland*, are united and made one parliament: Or those two single nations, which contain thousands of intelligent agents, may be united and made one nation, that is, one complex nation. So a man and his wife, who are two single natural persons, may be called one political person, for they are one person in the eye of the law, because what the one sustains, receives, or acts, is in many cases attributed to the other.

Now to apply these queries to the doctrine of two natures in the person of *Christ*.

Query VII. May not the great God, the infinite spirit, think it proper to assume into union with himself a finite spirit, in so close and intimate a manner as is possible for two such spirits to be united to each other? And may they not be esteemed as one complex being, one complex principle of action and passion?

Query VIII. Whether this complex agent, made up of the human and divine natures, so intimately united, may not have the personal pronouns, I, thou, and he, in the singular number, applied to it with a justness and propriety of speech, which pronouns are the distinguishing characters that human language has affixed to distinct persons?

Query IX. May not this union be properly called a personal union? Or, if we choose *greek* words, a hypostatical union? And may not this lay a foundation for that figure of speech which is so exceeding common in human language, viz. a communication of properties, when two different beings are thus united into one?

Query X. Though it be impossible for us to tell precisely and fully wherein the personal union consists, yet is it not sufficient for us to know that it is a nearer, and more intimate union between the godhead and the man *Jesus*, than there is between God and any other creature within our notice? And that it is sufficient to lay a foundation for the attribution of the distinguishing properties, operations and passions of the one to the other, or to the whole complex person?

Thus, though the saints are said to be united to God, or to be one with God, and to dwell in God, and to have God dwelling in them, yet we never find the peculiar properties, actions and passions of God and of the saints, mutually attributed to each other in that manner as the actions and passions, and peculiar properties of God and the man *Jesus* are; nor are they ever described as making one complex being or person; nor are the actions, passions, and peculiar properties of God and the saints, attributed to any such complex being, or compounded person, made up of both.

Query XI. Whether the person, the complete person of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, may not therefore be properly described, as the blessed God in personal union with a man,

or

\* I would not have used similitudes of so low a rank to represent things sacred, if I could have found such proper resemblances among the higher ranks of being: But, as others have observed before, an iron key that opens a lock, is better than a golden one which will not open it.

or as a man personally united to God? And whether this is not the most plain, easy and natural way, of accounting for the human and divine titles and characters attributed to him? Is not this done without straining any of the expressions of scripture from their most proper ideas, and always allowing the divine titles and characters to signify the idea of true deity, and the human characters to intend nothing superior to human nature?

Query XII. Whether upon this principle it may not be said *Christ* is God, *Christ* is man. He grew in wisdom and in stature. He knows all things, &c. referring to his two different natures, or the two different parts of his complex person? Upon this account, when we speak of God manifest in the flesh, may it not be properly said, "God was seen of angels, and he ascended into glory; *Christ* was of the seed of *David* after the flesh, and he was over all God blessed for ever; God laid down his life for us; God purchased the church with his own blood?" &c. If what is true of one of his natures, be affirmed concerning his whole person, and sometimes concerning the other nature, this union of two natures in one person lays a plain foundation for it.

Objection. "Supposing this strange notion, of two intelligent agents making one person, we shall find some things so manifestly spoken of the entire person, as will effectually preclude this way of escape: As particularly, when our Lord says, *Mark* xiii. 32. that "he knew not the day of judgment:" For though it is allowed to affirm of the person, what belongs to either nature, yet I fear it will be accounted no better than equivocation, to deny of the person what belongs to either, for certainly if it belongs to either nature, it is true of the person which is supposed to be constituted of both natures. By the same liberty of speaking might one not deny that *Christ* is God, meaning it of his human nature; and again, on the other hand, deny that *Christ* is man, meaning it of his divine nature? The same may be said concerning those places, where *Christ* says, I can do nothing of my self, &c." Sober appeal, page 146.

Answer, This objection is pushed home with it's utmost force by a very acute writer, Mr. *Emlyn*, in his humble inquiry, &c. And I would refer the reader to those answers which that excellent author, Mr. *Boyle*, has given it, in his "vindication of the true deity of *Christ*," from page 94. to page 108, edition 3d. wherein the whole dispute on this subject is contained. There are also several other authors who have vindicated this text, *Mark* xiii. 32. from the inferences which the *arian* writers would draw from it, by such considerations as these.

I. Our Saviour speaks this under the character of a mediator, or a prophet commissioned by the Father, to reveal his will to men: Now, since he had it not in his commission to reveal the day of judgment, he speaks as though he knew it not, that is, it was not within the reach or extent of that knowledge which his Father commissioned him to communicate to men at that time, though in his divine nature he had in himself the knowledge of it. By the same reason our Lord might say, he could do nothing of himself, which he had not commission to do as mediator.

II. That in this place *Christ* represents himself as the Son of man in the foregoing verses, *Mark* xiii. 26. and thereby he may be understood to distinguish his human nature from his divine, and to deny that he knew the day of judgment as he was man or the Son of man. And it is certain, that our blessed Lord, in the days of his humiliation, often spoke of himself considered in his human nature abstracted from the divine, though the union was never dissolved: It was his proper work on earth to re-



present himself as man, rather than as God, for "had the *jews* known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory," 1 Cor. ii. 8.

III. To this I would add, in the last place, That if the sonship of *Christ* does not belong to his godhead, even when he is called the Son of God, but belongs rather to his office as mediator, or to the derivation of his human nature, both soul and body from God the Father, in a peculiar and extraordinary way, then wheresoever he is represented as a Son, whether as Son of God or Son of man, still his sonship is an inferior part of his character; and on this account we may expect many things asserted or denied concerning him, which cannot properly be asserted or denied concerning his supreme nature or godhead, which has nothing in it self so much derivative and dependent, as seems to be implied in the word Son.

Now, if we should allow the inference which the objector makes, viz. that "if our Saviour in his whole complex person, should deny, concerning himself, those properties which he possesses in one of his natures, it would approach too near to an equivocation," yet when he speaks of himself expressly in his inferior character, or in his inferior nature, as a Son, or as mediator, he may then expressly deny any divine and supreme property of himself, considered in his divine nature, without any shadow of such an imputation. Though he would not say *Christ* is not God, or *Christ* is not man, yet he might freely declare, that his divine nature is not man, or the Son of man is not God; and in the same sense the Son can do nothing of himself, and the Son of man knows not the day of judgment.

I was willing to answer this objection particularly, because it is generally supposed by the *arian* writers to be unanswerable, though it has diverted me too far from the subject of personality, which I was pursuing.

Perhaps it may be yet further objected here, against the unity of the person of *Christ*, that the human and the divine natures are still two persons, for they are two distinct intelligent agents, and the pronouns I, thou, and he, may be applied to either of them, considered apart.

Answer I. To this I answer, the same may be said concerning any of the foregoing instances that I gave of two substances united into one compound substance: So the complex house may be called two houses; and the complex tree be called two trees; and *Great Britain* may be called two nations; and a man and wife may be called two persons still: There is a sense in which they are two, though there is another sense in which they are one. But I think it is sufficient to denominate each of these examples one being, or to attribute unity to each of them, if one thing is frequently predicated or affirmed concerning each of these examples as a complex idea.

Nor can I see any thing so terrible or heretical in it, if we should suppose the human nature, and divine nature of *Christ*, to be in some sense two distinct persons, as God and man, being each of them a single intelligent agent. I confess the frightful found of *Nestorianism* may reasonably forbid a man to indulge this language, because it will not be counted orthodox: But I know of no manner of injury done to the scripture, to the sacred truths of the gospel, nor to the common schemes of explaining the trinity, by such an allowance as this is. The reverend Mr. *Robert Fleming* is positive in this point. See "Christology," book III. chapter 3. page 279. And the scripture sometimes seems to speak of *Christ* as a distinct person in one of his natures, and as abstracted from the other, though it be not really separated.

Answer II. But yet I may add, that the common way of speaking to which our divines have accustomed themselves, denies the human nature of *Jesus Christ* to be so properly,

properly called a distinct person by it self, because it was never ordained to exist one moment separate from the godhead : And that therefore the complex idea of God-man, may with greater propriety be called a person, than the human nature alone. If I were engaged to support this notion, I might propose a parallel case to give some light to it, viz. an angel is called a person, because though it be but a single spirit, yet it was never ordained to exist in union with an animal body : And yet a human soul, which is one single spirit, is not so usually called a person in the separate state, because it is ordained to dwell in a human body ; and upon this account the addition of a human body is many times reckoned necessary to complete the personality, or to make a human soul, a complete person.

Answer III. If this difficulty could be solved no other way, we might correct the account which I have given of the word person, and include in it all the ideas which the learned doctor *Waterland* has expressed in his definition, viz. “ a single person is an intelligent agent, having the distinctive characters of I, thou, and he ; and not divided or distinguished into more intelligent agents capable of the same characters.” See “ second vindication of *Christ*’s divinity,” query fifteenth, where he has set this definition of the word in a clear and easy light. Let it be noted here, that the doctor accurately and judiciously uses the words divided and distinguished, not divisible and distinguishable ; for the human and divine constituents of the person of *Christ* are really divisible into two such persons, but since their union they never were, or shall be really separated and divided.

If after all it should be found, that the scripture, on some occasions, represents the divine nature of *Christ* as a person, and at another time speaks of the human soul as a person, either before or after it’s incarnation ; and if in other places it describes the divine and human natures united as one person, I cannot see any inconsistency, in all this ; supposing that person be distinguished into single and complex, and into complete and incomplete : In one or other of these senses, the word person may be variously applied, without any force or strain put on the words of scripture, and without any violation of the rules of human language.

I cannot but think the light in which I have here set this matter, of the complex person of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, is sufficiently evident ; and though, perhaps, we may not always agree about terms and names, and the use of the word person, yet the ideas which I have represented seem to be clear and distinct, and, perhaps, may give satisfaction to those who are not inclined to dispute about words and names. If a further account of the use of the term person in this controversy be desired, See “ dissertation the sixth.”

And since it may bear a dispute, whether the word person be ever used in this sense in scripture, it shall never be a matter of zeal and contest with me, whether another man will express these ideas in my words or no ; provided he will but acknowledge such a peculiar union between the human and divine natures in *Christ*, as sufficiently qualifies him for all the honours and offices of his mediation, and lays a foundation for attributing to him the appropriate and peculiar titles, characters and operations, both of God and man. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.



## DISSERTATION III.

The worship of *Christ*, as mediator, founded on his godhead.

IT is an unhappiness to the christian church, that there should be any controversies raised about matters of so sacred importance, as the worship which is paid to our blessed Saviour. It is agreed now a days on all hands, that both God the Father, and his Son *Jesus Christ*, are the proper objects of religious worship; but the chief dispute lies here, whether the worship that is paid to both of them be properly divine or no? And, whether our Saviour be the object of our worship, merely as a glorious creature, whom the Father has thus dignified, or as he himself has proper communion with God the Father in the divine nature, and is one God with him? That is, Whether true and proper godhead, or an inferior exalted character, be the proper foundation, and ground, of the worship that is paid to him?

I have read, with some diligence and care, what the author of the "sober appeal," and others, even the most ingenious of the modern *antitrinitarians* have written on this subject, where they endeavour to prove, that religious worship under the new testament is not so peculiar a prerogative of the supreme God, but that it may be given to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, though he be, in their sense, but a mere exalted creature; and that the new testament requires religious worship to be paid to him as such. After all, I cannot see sufficient reason to abandon my former argument on this head, which I have published in my "christian doctrine of the trinity," though, perhaps, I may take an advantage from this study, to correct some of my sentiments, while I endeavour to guard and defend the most important of them.

In the pursuit of this subject, I shall attempt to establish the common protestant doctrine of the worship of *Jesus Christ*, the mediator, upon the foundation of his godhead, and answer the most considerable objections I have met with in any of those writers.

The method I shall take in this discourse, is to lay down several successive propositions, to support the argument for the divinity of *Christ*, drawn from the payment of religious worship to him, and then shew, that divine, or religious worship, may be paid to him as mediator, even though the man *Jesus* is a part of the complex person of the mediator who is religiously worshiped.

Proposition I. "Worship is some peculiar honour or respect paid to an intelligent being, either real or imaginary."

The word worship, in old *english*, was used for honour in general, whether this be paid by the body or the mind, or both: An inward esteem or respect for any being may be called worship, though this word frequently implies also some external forms of bodily reverence, such as bowing, kneeling, or prostration.

It is also supposed to be paid to an intelligent being; for though the heathens worshipped stocks and stones, and the papists pay a sort of worship to the relics of the saints, and to their images, yet it is always built upon this supposition, that there is some God, or some inferior spirit, or power, that dwells in these images, or attends and takes notice of the respect that is paid to themselves, by the means or medium of the image, relick, or other material beings; unless, in some cases, idolaters have been

been so stupid as to imagine, the wooden idol it self had acquired intellectual powers.

Proposition II. "Human or civil worship, is that human honour which is paid to any of our fellow creatures on earth, upon the account of some excellency which a man may possess, or some special relation or character which a human person may sustain."

This sort of worship is given to knights, baronets, and several societies of men in our nation. This kind of worship was paid to king *David*, 1 *Chron.* xxix. 20. "They worshipped the king." And it is the same which may be supposed to be paid by the debtor to his lord, *Matt.* xviii. 26. "The servant fell down and worshipped his lord." So *Christ* tells the church of *Sardis*, he would make her adversaries "come and worship before her feet," *Rev.* iii. 9. And, perhaps, some who knew not that *Christ* was God, might pay this sort of worship to him as a very extraordinary man in the days of his humiliation.

Proposition III. "Religious worship is generally described to be divine honour paid to some superior being, on the account of some supposed divine excellencies and powers belonging to it."

I cannot boldly affirm, that all religious worship implies the absolute supremacy, the complete omnipotence, and sovereign godhead of the object of it, in the common sense of mankind. The heathens paid religious worship to inferior deities, and to household gods, whose power they did not imagine to be absolutely supreme; nay, they believed their influence to have a narrow and limited extent, though it was superior to human: But still they imagined it to be a sort of divine power, so far as it reached; and consequently the worship which they paid these inferior deities was divine worship. But God, in his word, has forbidden all this sort of worship to be given to any being beneath, and beside himself, as we shall see immediately.

Indeed, the learned doctor *Waterland*, in his "first defence of his sixteenth, and following queries," maintains, "that whatever has been, or may be, the sense of men, and their notions of worship, yet the great God has determined the meaning of religious worship in scripture to include the divinity, supremacy, eternity, &c. of the object:" See page 239, 240, &c. and has said several valuable things on this subject, worthy of a diligent perusal, and of great importance in this controversy. Our author, the appellant, utterly refuses this account, "for, says he, if religious worship imply the supremacy and divinity of the object, who will dispute it, whether it can belong only to the supreme God? But is not this plainly begging the question, and going in a circle?" "Sober appeal," page 122, 125.

But I ask leave to differ from his sentiment; nor can I think this is arguing in a circle, nor begging the question; for if doctor *Waterland* has proved, that the sense of religious worship, in scripture always includes the proper godhead, the supremacy and eternity of the object of it, then by the proof of this sense he cuts off all other inferior senses of religious worship, from the scriptural use of the word, and effectually maintains, that it must belong to God alone according to scripture. And when the appellant has again perused what this learned author has written, both in his "first, and second defence of the queries," perhaps he may find, that he has well vindicated the sole right of the supreme God to all religious worship; therefore I shall refer to his writings, rather than rehearse them here: That learned author stands in no need of my assistance to defend his arguments.

The appellant gives us another idea of religious worship, for it seems to him, that "religious worship imports our expressing a dependence on, or making acknowledgment to some other being as superior to man. There might be the same outward signs



signs of this worship, as of civil respect, such as bowing, kneeling, &c. And there might be the same immediate acts, as asking favours, returning thanks, &c. which, no doubt, are allowable between man and man. But all direct expressions of respect and homage to other beings, as of a superior nature, and having power over us, whether visible or invisible, I take to be properly religious worship. And this was forbidden absolutely under the old testament: This would have been accounted the worshipping another god, though they did not acknowledge the being they worshipped to be supreme, eternal, immutable, &c. which indeed, in most instances, could never be supposed." Appeal, page 123. margin.

I cannot say I am fully satisfied with this account of religious worship; for if an angel should bring me a message, or command from heaven, would it be unlawful to ask him to explain it by his superior knowledge? Or, to desire him to return again, and give me some help toward the performance of it? Or to make a thankful acknowledgment to him for his angelical service and condescension to converse with me? I confess these things do not express a direct dependence on this angel in distinction from God, nor any acknowledgment of such a dependence on him, any further than merely as a divine messenger, and therefore these, perhaps, may not arise to this author's idea of religious worship\*.

But however let us now take this idea of worship which the appellant himself has proposed, and state it thus more at large, and I think, according to his meaning.

Religious worship is "honour more than human, paid to some being on the account of some supposed excellencies, or powers, more than human, belonging to it, with an acknowledgment of our dependence on this being, and subjection to it." And now let us see, whether according to his own description, my argument for the divinity of *Christ*, drawn from religious worship, will not stand upon firm and unshaken ground.

Proposition IV. "God has assumed religious worship to himself in his word, as his own peculiar prerogative, and with the severest penalties has forbid it to be paid to any inferior being."

It is not my business here to enquire, whether in the abstracted nature of things a mere creature be, or be not, capable of religious worship, that is, of some honours superior to human, and yet inferior to divine: but it is evident, that God thought it the best way to secure his own divine honour, and to guard his people in all ages from idolatry, by forbidding all such religious honours to be paid to any mere creature whatsoever: And this he does in most general expressions, excluding all sorts, kinds, and forms, of religious worship whatsoever, and that in the most awful and solemn language, as a matter of the greatest importance. *Exod. xxxiv. 14.* "Thou shalt worship no other God, for the Lord, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God." *Deut. vi. 4, 13, 14, 15.* "The Lord our God is one Lord: Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and him shalt thou serve, and shalt swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other gods; for the Lord thy God is a jealous God among you, lest the anger of the Lord thy God be kindled against thee and destroy thee." *Deut. x. 20.*

"Thou

\* I acknowledge it is a more difficult, and a more important thing, than I heretofore imagined, to ascertain the precise idea of religious worship. And since it seems manifest in scripture, that it is appropriate to God, I take the liberty with my own writings, to retract that sentence in my book of the trinity, page 482. "If there be any mere creature to whom I can communicate the knowledge of my wants, &c. the light of reason and scripture lead me to address him." And that sentence also, page 446. "The very reason of things leads us to adore him." And I give thanks to the appellant, who has convinced me that these expressions are uncautious and unguarded. Though according to the method of controversial writers, who seem to renounce all retractions, I might have a pretence to colour them over: But I chuse to stand corrected.

"Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name: He is thy praise, he is thy God, that hath done for thee great and terrible things." *Deut. xiii. 1, 2.* "If a prophet shall say, let us go after other gods and serve them," [it is interpreted, verse 5. "a turning them away from the Lord their God," and, "that prophet shall be put to death." And, verse 6, &c. "If thy brother, thy son, thy daughter, thy wife, or thy friend, &c. shall say, let us go and serve other gods, thou shalt stone him with stones that he die," for it is interpreted a "thrusting thee away from the Lord God." And, verse 12, &c. "If a whole city shall agree to serve other gods, the inhabitants of that city shall be utterly destroyed with the edge of the sword, the city itself shall be burned with fire, and shall be a heap for ever." *1 Sam. vii. 3.* "Prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only, and he will deliver you." *Hosea xiii. 4.* "I am the Lord thy God from the land of *Egypt*, and thou shalt know no other God but me, for there is no other Saviour beside me," *Psal. lxxxi. 9, 10.* "There shall no strange god be in thee, neither shalt thou worship any strange god. I am the Lord thy God," &c.

The first of the ten commandments delivered with such solemnity upon mount Sinai, *Exod. xx. 2.* is this, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me;" that is, no other objects of worship, upon which thou shalt have a religious dependence, or to which thou shalt pay religious honours.

Proposition V. "Religious worship is attributed to our Lord *Jesus Christ* both in prophecy, in precept, and in example in scripture."

*Psal. xlv. 11.* "He is thy Lord, and worship thou him." *Heb. i. 6.* "When he bringeth the first begotten into the world, he saith, let all the angels of God worship him." *Rom. x. 13.* "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, that is, *Christ*, shall be saved." *Rev. v. 13.* "Every creature which is in heaven and earth, &c. heard I, saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the lamb, for ever and ever." Besides the account we have of the disciples, of *Stephen* the martyr, and of *St. Paul*, the last apostle, worshipping *Christ*, and praying to him: and the several doxologies that are paid to him, both in earth and in heaven, are sufficient proofs that religious worship is due to him; nor do any of the modern *anti-trinitarians* deny it.

Proposition VI. "Thence we infer, that true godhead belongs to our Lord *Jesus Christ*;" or that he has such communion in the godhead of the Father, such an oneness with the Father in the divine nature, as renders him justly capable of religious, or divine worship: For if religious worship be a peculiar prerogative of the true God, and *Jesus Christ* has religious worship paid to him, he must also be the true God.

Let us now consider what the objectors have to say in opposition to these three last propositions.

The appellant and his brethren readily allow, that religious worship is, and ought to be paid to our Lord *Jesus Christ*; he allows also, that during the days of the old testament religious worship was absolutely forbidden to be given to any creature, page 123. margin. He seems hereby to allow what I have proposed as the meaning of the first command, viz. "That there should be no other object of religious worship but the Lord *Jehovah*, the one God of *Israel* \*." But then he will not allow

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\* That this is the true meaning of the first command, is evident from many places of scripture; for wheresoever men set up any other object of worship, it is called in scripture language "the setting up idols, or other gods," even though these idols were only designed to be the objects of mediate or subordinate worship;



the inference, "That therefore *Jesus Christ* is the true God:" For if God signifies an object of worship, he supposes the first command is so far repealed under the gospel, as to admit another, even an inferior object of worship, viz. "our Lord *Jesus Christ*, as the fourth command in the decalogue is repealed, so far as concerns that seventh day which the *jews* were required to keep as their sabbath," page 125.

Here the appellant speaks his sentiments with freedom, in plain language, and confesses the necessity he is driven to, of supposing the first commandment to be in part repealed. He seems to be conscious that these words, "Thou shalt have no other gods, no other *Elohim* before me," exclude all other gods, both inferior and subordinate as well as supreme, beside the one *Jehovah*, the Lord God of the *jews*: Nor can he account any other way for the worship of *Christ*, as an inferior god, but by repealing in part the first commandment. Now to prove that the first command is not repealed, neither in whole nor in part \*, I give these six reasons.

Reason I. The very grounds upon which this antient command, of worshipping one God only, and the prohibition of other gods, is founded, abide the same under the gospel; and the reasons by which it was enforced under the old testament, seem to remain the same under the new, viz. his being the one God, the one *Jehovah*, the eternal, the almighty, the Creator of all things, his jealousy of his own honour, his deliverance of his people from bondage, his being the author of the salvation of his people, and his sovereign authority over them, with his aliusufficiency for their help and happiness. Now, is not God the same only Lord God, and one *Jehovah*, the same eternal, almighty, and Creator of all things? Is not God as jealous of his own honour under the gospel, as he was under the law? Is he not that being who has delivered his people from spiritual bondage, which was typified by the land of *Egypt*? Is he not the same one God under the new testament which he was under the old? Is he not that God upon whom his people as much depend for deliverance and salvation? And therefore to admit another God under the new testament to be the proper object of worship, seems to be as inconsistent with the unity, the holy jealousy, and the aliusufficiency of God, under the gospel, as it was in the days of *Judaism*.

There are also several other expressions of the prophet *Isaiah*, and the other prophets, wherein God asserts his own unity, his own peculiar prerogative and right to religious worship, in opposition to all other gods, or other objects of worship, not only because he alone is the Creator of all things, but he alone is omnipresent, he alone knows all future things from the beginning; he alone is the maker and redeemer of *Israel*; he is the first and the last, &c. Now the one true God has the same reasons to maintain his divine prerogative, and sole right to religious worship under the gospel; he alone is the omnipresent, the omniscient God, the maker and saviour of his people.

If it be objected here, that *Christ* is also represented as the Creator of all things, the maker and saviour of his people, &c. and therefore he may become an object of worship too, we readily allow it; because we suppose him to be one God with the Father,

worship; nay, though they were only mediums of worshipping the true God; so *Jeroboam's* calves are called other gods, 1 *Kings* xiv. 9. 2 *Chron.* xiii. 8. *Laban's* images are called gods, *Gen.* xxxi. 30. which were probably the household gods of the family, *Joshua* xxiv. 2. Though by these *Jeroboam*, *Nabon* and *Laban*, might ultimately worship the true God, as *Gen.* xxxi. 49, 53. Whatever was honoured with religious worship, in scripture sense is called God, and therefore in scripture language every thing but *Jehovah*, or the true and supreme God, is excluded from such worship by the first commandment.

\* I see not, indeed, how it is possible for this first command to be repealed in any part, unless it be wholly repealed; for the form of it is negative, and thus it excludes any other god or gods whatsoever: Now if any other god be admitted under the new testament, I think the whole command is repealed.

Father, and therefore the antient titles and characters of godhead belong to him, and render him justly capable of religious worship.

Reason II. If *Christ* or his apostles taught the *jews* the worship of any other god, or gods, beside *Jehovah*, the God of *Israel*, I question whether all their miracles, and their professed commission from heaven, could ever have justly gained them any credit with the *jews*; whether they ought not to have been rejected by the law of God, according to that solemn declaration of God to *Israel*, and that universal rule which he gave them by which to examine and try all their succeeding prophets, *Deut. xiii. 1-5*. "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder cometh to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul: And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death, because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God."

If it should be said here, that the reason why the offender is stoned, was not because he led them to other gods, but because he turned them away from the true God: I answer, that there is nothing of this kind mentioned in the description of the crime, viz. a turning them away from the true God, but it is only brought in at the end of the law, to shew the malignity of the crime itself, and to make it appear, that the teaching them to worship other gods, would be interpreted by the true God as a rejection of himself. And this is plain in several instances, when the *jews* worshipped other gods and retained the worship of the true God still, yet they are charged with turning away from the Lord their God.

Upon this supposition therefore, that *Christ* or his apostles taught the *jews* to worship another god, or gods, which they had not before known, I would speak it with holy fear and caution, does there not seem to be a divine command to put them to death, whatsoever signs or wonders they produced to vindicate their commission? And thus, if they set up our Lord *Jesus Christ*, whom the appellant allows to be called God in an inferior sense, and proposed him as another god, another object of religious worship, did they not hereby sap the foundations of all their own pretences to a divine commission, and seem to give the *jews*, their countrymen, a right to stone them to death, according to their own law? And I humbly question, whether all their miracles could have been a sufficient protection to them.

Let it be considered further, that when the *jews* took up stones to stone our Saviour, they pronounced him worthy of death according to their law, for that "he being a man made himself god," *John x. 33*. Whereas the words which our Saviour spake were these, "I and my Father are one," verse 30. He doth not deny himself to be God, which seemed very necessary to be done at such an important juncture as this, if he had not been the true God, nor doth he declare himself to be a God different from the Father, which might have given the *jews* a juster pretence to stone him; but his words are, "I and my Father are one," which represent him to be the same God as the Father, or to be God by virtue of some personal oneness with the godhead of the Father.

Nor can I conceive how any thing else but the supposition of this doctrine could have so honourably vindicated our Saviour's conduct at this juncture, and at the same time have taken away all just pretence from the *jews* for attempting to stone him. Since he did not preach up another God, his miraculous works obliged them



to believe all that he said, and to these mighty works he appeals, verse 32. Whereas, if he had preached up himself as another god, that *jewish* law seems to stand in force against him notwithstanding his miracles.

I confess this thought has something in it very solemn and awful; it carries, in my esteem, very great weight with it, and confirms me in the belief, that *Jesus Christ* has communion in the godhead of the Father, and is in a proper sense the same God; otherwise I cannot see how he could be made an object of religious worship: For if he be God only in an inferior sense, then he is another god, and seems hereby to lie exposed to the condemnation of this sacred rule in *Deuteronomy*; this divine test of future prophets which *Jehovah* gave to *Israel* by the mouth of *Moses*. The learned doctor *Waterland* is so positive on this head, that he asserts, "The worship of the same one God, exclusive of all others, is for ever made unchangeable by this text."

"First defence of the queries," page 231.

If it should be objected by an *arian* here, That this, and all other prohibitions under the old testament, to worship any other god, must be construed with a particular relation to those false gods and idols of the heathen nations of which the *jews* were in danger; but it must not be supposed, that God ever designed by such language to exclude from religious worship so glorious a being as his own Son, who can hardly be called a creature, though he be a distinct being, produced by the will and power of God, and of a nature inferior to the Father?

Answer I. The language of this prohibition is very general, it excludes all *Elohim*, God, or gods, which thou hast not known. Now it does not appear from scripture, that the *jews* knew any true god besides the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, their only *Jehovah*: So that the word plainly excluding all gods that they had not known, seems for ever to exclude *Christ* from their worship, if he be not the same God with *Jehovah*, the God of *Abraham*, whom the *jews* knew.

Answer II. How could the *jews* ever imagine that there was such a limitation intended and implied in the general prohibition, when there is not any intimation of it in the books of *Moses*; nor, indeed, in any of the prophets? And since *Jesus Christ*, in the *arian* sense, was an unknown god to them, how could they ever come to the knowledge of him, or be assured that he is so glorious a being as the Son of God, and that he is appointed by the Father to be called God, and to be worshipped, except by the divine tokens of prophecy and miracle? How should they ever know that this supposed limitation of the general and solemn prohibition of worship did not reach to exclude this person, but by some such divine testimonies? Now the force of these very divine testimonies, miracle and prophecy, seem to be enervated and precluded in this single case, viz. the receiving any other god, or having any other object of worship. In all other cases, as *Grotius* well observes, "de veritate religionis christianæ," prophecy and miracle were constituted the criteria of an inspired person, and the *jews* were bound to receive him; but in this one case of worshipping another god, these criteria were excluded by this very law or statute: So that this law of having no other god seems to be confirmed to the *jews* for ever.

If the objector should persist and say, that "there are intimations given us in the old testament that the *Messiah* must be worshipped, when he comes, and that therefore the *jews* would not be so much surprized at the proposal of another object of worship in the days of the *Messiah*." To this I answer two ways;

Answer I. This seems to be a begging the question, and taking it for granted, that the *Messiah* is not the one true God in any sense, which is the present matter of debate.

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Answer II. It should be observed, that in most of those places, wherein it is foretold that the *Messiah* should be worshipped with religious worship, his godhead is also intimated, *Psal.* xcvi. 1. "*Jehovah* reigneth, let the earth rejoyce;" verse 6. "All the people see his glory;" verse 7. "confounded be they that boast themselves of idols: Worship him all ye gods, or angels:" Which verse is applied to *Christ*, *Heb.* i. 6. So *Psal.* cii. 15. where the kingdom of the *Messiah* is foretold, "the gentiles shall fear the name of the Lord;" verse 22. The people are gathered together, and the kingdoms to serve the Lord; verses 24, 25. "Thou hast laid the foundations of the earth," &c. which is also applied to *Christ*, *Heb.* i. 10. So *Psal.* xlv. 6. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;" verse 11. "He is thy Lord, and worship thou him;" which is also applied to *Christ* in the same place. So again, *Isa.* viii. 13, 14. "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear and dread, and he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence;" which compared with *Isa.* xxviii. 16. *1 Pet.* ii. 6, 7. *Rom.* ix. 33. *Matth.* xxi. 44, &c. shew that this is spoken of the *Messiah*: And several other scriptures might be cited to the same purpose. So that still it seems to be the indwelling or united godhead, which is worshipped in the *Messiah*, and which gives the *Messiah*, in his complex person, a right to religious worship, as we shall see hereafter.

Reason III. Our blessed Saviour, in the beginning of his ministry, was tempted by the devil, to fall down and worship him; upon which occasion our Lord confirms the first commandment, and repeats and cites the words of the *mosaic* law, *Mat.* iv. 10. "It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." *Deut.* vi. 13. and x. 20. And it is worthy our observation, what doctor *Waterland* remarks here, that "the reason which *Christ* gives for refusing to worship him, is not that he was a bad spirit, an enemy to God, or that God had not commanded it, but because none are to be worshipped but God only."

It may be objected here, That our Saviour only means to appropriate supreme worship to God the Father, but he does not exclude himself, nor any other inferior being, from an inferior and subordinate worship, proper for subordinate beings, and that therefore subordinate worship may be paid to one who is not the true and eternal God.

I answer, that as all inferior and subordinate \* worship, of any mere inferior or subordinate beings, is acknowledged to be excluded under the old testament, by the *mosaic* law, so our Saviour's citation and repetition of it there, does most expressly and directly exclude mere creatures from subordinate worship as well as supreme: For the devil does not tempt him to pay supreme worship to himself, since he acknowledges that he is not the maker, nor supreme possessor of the kingdoms of the world; but he says only that these were delivered into his hands, and therefore he was capable of bestowing them upon *Christ*. As he therefore was but a subordinate possessor, he could demand but subordinate worship, which our Lord forbids by a citation out of the *mosaic* law, *Luke* iv. 5, 6, 7, 8.

Now in disputes on this subject, and this text, the *unitarians* seem to have found out but these two refuges, for which they have any colour or pretence.

1. That notwithstanding the devil's own expression, that he received his kingdoms and powers from another hand, and that they were not originally his own, by su-

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\* When I speak of supreme and subordinate worship in this place, I would be understood with respect to the proper foundation of worship, and not with regard to the modes of worship, the motives, designs, or particular forms of address; for in the ninth proposition I have shewn, that these may possibly be mediate or subordinate, even when God is worshipped under some subordinate character, though the foundation of worship is always supreme or proper divinity; and thither I refer the reader. See page 447—452.



preme right, yet that he was so impudent and unreasonable in the same breath to desire divine worship. To which I answer, that as impudent and unreasonable as his requests may be at some times, yet in this place, the *unitarians* have no manner of proof that he requested supreme worship; and there is a rational probability of the contrary. It is most likely, that he desired such worship as the heathens were wont to pay to any of their deities, besides the supreme, that is, those deities into whose hands their supreme God had delivered the government of particular parts of the creation.

2. It is pretended that *Christ's* prohibition of worshipping any thing besides the true God at this time of his temptation, was of no force after his own exaltation; and though God only was to be worshipped at that time, yet in three or four years afterwards *Jesus Christ* also being exalted, might have religious worship paid to him, though he were but an inferior being.

To this it is answered, that our blessed Lord not only now, but afterwards, preaches the same doctrine; he takes other occasions, in the course of his ministry, to confirm that solid foundation of all religion, "that there is but one God, one object of worship:" Now if he himself, or his apostles immediately after his resurrection, had been appointed to set up the worship of himself as a mere inferior being, and another god, it is not to be supposed that our Lord *Jesus* should have introduced his own ministry upon earth with so sacred a confirmation of the one only object of worship, in his repelling the temptation of the devil: Nor can we think he would have taken frequent occasion to maintain that doctrine and practice inviolable, and that without the least hint of any repeal of it.

So very important and considerable a change of religion as this, which repeals the first commandment, and admits another god to be owned and worshipped, would certainly have required a very particular and express account of it to be given to the *jews*, and much labour to be spent in persuading them of the change of this great and fundamental article of their faith and practice, "Hear, O *Israel*, the Lord thy God is one Lord, thou shalt have no God besides him."

Here if it be said, *Christ* gave some intimations of a repeal of it when he speaks of his own future worship, and told them, that "all men must honour the Son, as they honour the Father." *John* v. 22. Let us remember also, that he gave frequent intimations of his own communion in the godhead: For he said, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me; I and my Father are one; *John* xiv. 10, 11. x. 30. and thus the first command abides in it's full force still.

Reason IV. That religious worship is the peculiar prerogative of God alone under the new testament, as well as under the old, is further proved by the continuance of this precept in force after the resurrection and exaltation of *Christ* as well as before: For the apostle *John* was twice going to worship the angel, *Rev.* xix. 10. and xxii. 8, 9. the angel refused the worship both times, and said, "See thou do it not, I am thy fellow servant, worship God;" which must necessarily signify worship God alone, or that God only is the proper object of thy worship, otherwise it could not exclude the worship of an angel. Now if God alone was to be worshipped after the full glorification of *Christ*, when God had appointed every knee to bow to him, and when he was known and adored by the church as a proper object of worship, I think it is a very plain consequence that *Christ* is God; that he has a glorious communion in the divine nature with the one true God, the God of *Israel*, who was the only proper object of worship under the old testament, and is the same under the new.

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Whether St. *John* mistook this angel for *Christ* himself, or whether he might uncautiously, and on a sudden, attempt to pay too sublime a respect and honour to a mere angel, is much the same to my argument; for the angel forbids this honour to be done to himself, as being due to God alone; and this being the reason of his repeated prohibition, the same reason would also exclude *Jesus Christ* from worship, if he were not true God. And, perhaps, this redoubled occurrence and prohibition might be placed in the end of scripture, by divine providence, to let us see, that from the beginning of the bible to the end of it, God alone is intitled to religious worship.

Reason V. The *jews* had learned from the old testament, the worship of one true God and him only; and there is scarce any command more frequently renewed, or guarded with more awful sanctions, and more terrible examples of the wrath of God against the breakers of it: Now if *Christ* or his apostles had so much as pretended any repeal of this law, the *jews* would have had a most public and glorious pretence against christianity. The doctrine of the worship of *Christ* as a mere creature, would have raised in the heart of every *jew* one of the most unconquerable prejudices against the gospel. Since the time that they smarted so severely in *Babylon* by a captivity of seventy years for their idolatries, they have been always observed to have the utmost aversion to every appearance of idolatry, or the worship of any thing beside the one true God: St. *Paul* testifies thus of his countrymen, *Rom. ii. 17, 22.* "Thou art called a *jew*, and abhorrest idols." Now if the crucifixion of the *Messiah* was a stumbling block to the *jews*, which many of them could not get over, the worship of a man, an exalted creature, would, in all probability, have been a much greater stumbling-block and impediment of their belief of the gospel. Their aversion to a crucified *Messiah* arose only from their own foolish traditions and pre-conceived errors; but their aversion to the worship of a man is patronized by all their sacred writings, for they could hardly read any part of their bible but they found some precept, threatening, or divine judgment recorded, against worshipping any creature, or receiving any other god.

It is evident in the writings of the apostles, that *Jesus Christ* is several times called God, and that he is worshipped. Now if he has not the same godhead with the God of the *jews*, then he is another god, another object of worship; and when the *jews* had smarted so terribly in all former ages for their worshipping any beside their own true God, and for their breach of the first commandment, it would appear like an immoveable and everlasting bar against their acceptance of the religion of *Christ*, if they had been told, that this first commandment was now in some measure repealed, and that they must now admit of another god, even the man *Jesus*, and pay him religious worship, though he were but a creature.

Shall it be objected here, that there were several parts of their religion repealed, namely, all their ceremonial law, which they seemed to be as fond of as of any thing in their religion; and why might they not submit to a repeal of the first command also?

But it may be answered, That there was sufficient evidence given of the repeal of the ceremonial law, by discovering to them, that all these were but shadows of the promised blessings of the *Messiah*; and consequently when the substance and glory of their religion appears in the reign of their expected *Messiah*, it is necessary that the shadows should vanish and disappear. So St. *Paul* argues in his epistle to the *jews* or *hebrews*. Even their sabbath itself in the *jewish* forms of it, was a type of the blessed rest under the gospel, and of the final rest in heaven, as the apostle proves in the



the fourth chapter of that epistle, as well as in *Col.* ii. 16, 17. But there is not the least intimation that the first commandment had any thing in it ceremonial or typical; nor can any such reason be given why that should ever suffer a repeal.

I add further, That the apostle not only gives a reason for it, but I think he declares in very plain language, that their laws of ceremonies are repealed in the epistles to the *Galatians* and *Colossians*, as well as the *Hebrews*; at least so far as not to be necessary: And I am well assured, that if the first command were to have suffered such a repeal, and to have admitted another god, there would have been as much, or more need of plain and express declarations of it by inspired men, because there seems to be so much more of natural reason for the continuance of this command, than there is, or can be, for any part of the ceremonial law.

It will be further enquired, "Then how came any of the *jews* ever to be persuaded to receive christianity, and to worship *Christ* whom they knew to be a man, if they had such an utter aversion to every shadow of idolatry, and the worship of any thing beside the God of *Abraham*, their own true and only God?"

The answer is obvious here, for the apostles did not in their very first preaching require of them the religious worship of *Christ*, but by degrees led them into it. They first preached up the peculiar and extraordinary presence of God with the man *Jesus*, whereby he wrought miracles, as is evident, *Acts* ii. 22. and *Acts* x. 38. "God was with him." Then they taught by degrees, that the "fulness of the godhead dwelt in him bodily," as *Col.* ii. 9. That the union betwixt the true God and the man *Jesus* was so great, as that the actions and sufferings of *Christ* were attributed to God, that "God redeemed the church with his own blood," *Acts* xx. 28. That *Christ* was so far one with the true God, as that upon this account he is called "God manifest in the flesh, God over all blessed for ever," *1 Tim.* iii. 16. and *Rom.* ix. 5. Thus the *jews* themselves might be led to the worship of *Jesus Christ* by the discovery of the same godhead dwelling in him, and united to him, whom they and their fathers were taught to worship by the law of *Moses*. *Jesus Christ* is the same God, or *Jehovah*, but now dwelling in flesh; and this they might prove out of many of their own prophets.

Reason VI. As the doctrine of worshipping another, an inferior god, would have been a just stumbling block to the *jews* against receiving christianity, so it might have been fairly objected by the *gentiles* against the preaching of the apostles, when in their ministry they demolished the heathen gods and heroes.

The blessed apostles made it their business, every where to inculcate the doctrine of the one true God, to call the heathens away from the worship of all their inferior deities, the souls of all their departed heroes, and all such as "are not God by nature," *Acts* xiv. 15. and xvii. 24. *Gal.* iv. 8. that they might no longer "serve those who by nature are no gods." Now, how could they expect success in their reasonings with the heathens on this subject, if they introduced *Jesus Christ* as another god, as an inferior god, as one who by nature was no god, and proposed him to be their god, or the object of their worship, merely by the appointment of the supreme God? Would not this look like building again the things which they had destroyed, if *Jesus Christ* had no such communion in the natural supreme and eternal godhead, as might render him a proper, capable object of their religious worship, according to the general dictate of scripture, that we must worship God alone? Would not this have a tendency to establish their old superstition and polytheism rather than destroy it?

Let us suppose *St. Paul* had been just preaching up the unity of the true God to the *Athenians*, or *Corinthians*, and forbidding them to worship any of these inferior gods,

gods, and the souls of departed heroes; let us suppose that he had fixed their faith upon the one true God, and appropriated their worship to him; and suppose in a little time after, he should teach them to call upon the name of the Lord *Jesus*, which doubtless he did to all his disciples, for the christians were generally known by this character, viz. "All that call upon the name of the Lord *Jesus*," 1 Cor. i. 2. What would the heathens say? "Did you not lately teach us the worship of the one true God, and bid us renounce our several departed heroes and inferior deities, and all other gods whatsoever? And are you already bringing in your departed hero *Christ* for a new inferior god among us?" I know not how the apostle could readily and clearly give a plain and satisfactory answer to them upon the *arian* principle. But if he should tell them *Jesus Christ* is not another god, for this man *Jesus* has the fulness of the true godhead dwelling in him, he is united to the one true God, and thereby becomes one with God, and upon this account may justly be worshipped. Such an answer of the apostle would stop their accusation, would make his own doctrine consistent with itself, would maintain the unity of the true God, and justify his demolition of their inferior deities.

I freely confess, that there is a real difference between the *arian* worship of *Christ*, and the heathen worship of their gods or heroes; because these are either fictitious, or at best have no such real power and authority as our Saviour is allowed to have even in the *arian* scheme. But it would be hard to make this difference appear to the heathen multitudes where the apostle preached; for if *Christ* be supposed to have no superior nature to his human soul and body, the gentiles would plead hard for their inferior gods and heroes, both as having an extensive power in themselves suited to their particular charge, and as being appointed by *Jupiter* their chief god, to perform various services for mankind, to exercise their deputed powers, and to receive inferior worship. Now it would be a tedious and difficult matter to convince the gentiles of the real difference between their own heroes and the christian hero; and it would be hard to make it appear to them, that the christians inferior god had a much juster title to worship than the heathen inferior gods, upon the supposition of having no God beside him who made all things. And while the apostles continually inculcated this doctrine of the unity of God; and while the gentiles themselves as well as the apostles called every thing God which they worshipped, it would be very hard to prove to them, that *Jesus Christ*, if he were a mere creature, had so much better pretence and claim to their worship than their own heroes had, without much labour of distinctions far above the reach of the multitudes; whereas the adorableness of *Christ*, on the account of the supreme indwelling godhead, sets all things right with ease and plainness: He must be worshipped as supreme God, for he is one with God supreme.

Indeed the appellant exclaims against this sort of reasoning. "Would it not grieve one, says he, if it may not move one's indignation, to see christians representing the worship of *Christ*, the only true and proper worship which the gospel directs us to pay unto him, as little better than heathenish idolatry; and thus in effect making the blessed *Jesus* no better than an idol?" "Appeal," page 128.

Surely the appellant must needs know, that I am not singular in this reasoning; and that this is no new charge against his doctrine; doctor *Cudworth* in his "intellectual system," doctor *Waterland* in his "defence of the queries," doctor *Smallbrooke* in his two sermons against *arianism*, and others, concur with the fathers writing on this subject, to charge the *arians* with a restoration of idolatry, and support of *polytheism*.



ism, like that of the *pagans*, when they call *Jesus Christ* a mere creature, and yet pay him religious worship.

And truly, if this argument move grief and indignation, it will fall heavy on the *arian* scheme, and not on my argument : For it is that scheme which represents the blessed *Jesus* as an inferior god, and thus brings him too near to the rank of those inferior gods or heroes in the sense of the heathens ; whereas the scripture places him in a vastly superior character, as God over all blessed for ever, and as one with God the Father ; and though I believe from my heart, that several of these writers have a sacred and profound reverence for the blessed *Jesus*, and adore, and love, and trust in him, yet this inferior or figurative godhead, which is all they usually allow him ; and upon which they build his worship, seems to bring him down too near to those ideas and characters which the heathens attributed to their inferior gods. I am well persuaded, that these gentlemen abhor the thought of such indignity offered to our blessed Lord, but their opinion seems to draw such consequences after it, and it is neither unfair nor unfriendly to give them a hint of it.

To conclude this part of the argument, to prove the everlasting obligation of this command, to worship God only, I beg leave to transcribe a few lines from Mr. *Boyle*, in his excellent "vindication of the true deity of our blessed Saviour," page 142. edition the third. "Upon the whole, the opinion and practice of the *unitarians* plainly re-advances that creature worship, which is one great design of the christian religion to overturn and abolish. It undermines that grand article of the everlasting gospel that was to be preached to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people ; fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come, and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters," *Rev.* xiv. 6, 7. And this it does by setting up as an object of religious worship a creature, to whom neither the divine perfections nor works belong."

Thus I have confirmed this argument for the divinity of *Christ*, which is drawn from religious worship paid to him, by answering the objection which supposes religious worship not forbidden to a creature under the new testament, though it was under the old : And I think it is made pretty evident, that the same prohibition stands still in force under the new testament, and that the first command obliges christians as well as *jews*, viz. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me:" And therefore if *Christ* is a God, or an object of religious worship, though he be another person, yet he is not another God, but one and the same God with the Father, or the God of *Israel*, for we must have no other God but the God of *Israel*, we must not have two Gods.

A second objection which is used by the refiners of the *arian* scheme, against the appropriating all religious worship to God alone, is, that "this doctrine absolutely precludes God himself from all right of appointing any person to be adored with any religious worship at all, whatsoever exalted station he may be raised to in the divine oeconomy, unless he has true and eternal godhead in him, that is, unless he has the same inherent and independent right to this worship as God the Father himself has."

Answer. Suppose it be granted, that this doctrine does preclude it ; but then let it be considered, it is God himself has precluded it in his own word, whence this our doctrine is derived. I will not say, this is absolutely precluded in the nature of things ; but if God himself, in every part of his word, both in the old and new testament, has confined religious worship to himself as his own prerogative ; and rather than let any mere creature be worshipped, if he condescends himself in the person of his Son, or in union with the man *Christ Jesus*, to assume inferior characters, and transact inferior concerns in his own oeconomical kingdom, surely there is nothing in

in this which is absurd or unscriptural. It rather makes a divine grandeur run through all the transactions of God with the children of men ; and there is no dishonour done to the sovereignty of God, by precluding himself by his own counsels, and his own revelations, from exalting any mere creature to be the object of religious worship.

Now, that God has precluded all the mere created beings, even of the invisible world, from this honour, seems naturally to be inferred from the care and solicitude which God has shewn in the old testament as well as in the new, to prevent angels from receiving any religious worship from the children of men. And doctor *Waterland* offers most ingenious and probable reasons for it. "Defence" I. query XVI. page 231, 232. Suppose some exalted creatures could know, hear, and relieve our wants at any distance ; suppose they were appointed to bear some rule over us, and suppose we thought it proper to respect, worship, and adore them accordingly : "But God's thoughts are not our thoughts ; he has entered an express caveat and prohibition in the case. Possibly he may apprehend it to be more for his own glory, and more for our good, that our whole worship and service be paid to him than a part only. Possibly he may know, such is human infirmity, that if any part, or kind or degree, of religious worship, was permitted to be given to creatures, it might insensibly alienate our minds from the Creator ; or eat out all our reverence and respect for God. Or, it may be, that while our acknowledgments are ordered to be paid to him, and to him alone, we may thereby be induced to live more in dependence on him ; become more immediately united to him ; and have the greater love and esteem for him. He will not, perhaps, leave his favours in the hands, or in the disposal of his creatures, lest we should forget whom we are principally obliged to ; or lest we should imagine, that he is not always every where present, to hear our petitions, and to answer them, according to his own good pleasure. These, or a thousand better reasons, infinite wisdom may have, for appropriating all acts of religious worship to God. It is sufficient for us to know that he has done it : And of this, holy scripture has given abundant proof." Thus that learned author.

Wheresoever angels appear in scripture, both under the *jewish* and christian oeconomy, you find them solicitous to forbid the worship of themselves, unless where the angel of the covenant, or the angel of God's presence appeared, that is, the *Messiah*, in whom was the name of God, and who assumed the titles of *Jehovah* and the God of *Israel*, whom we generally believe to be the Lord *Jesus Christ* himself. Worshipping of angels is a thing utterly forbidden, and yet if the angel of the covenant was worshipped, I cannot account for it any other way, but by supposing the angel who said I am *Jehovah*, was really *Jehovah*, the only true God, or had the fullness of the godhead dwelling in him ; he was God manifest in the burning bush, God manifest in the *shechinah*, before he was God manifest in the flesh.

There is a third objection which they bring against the doctrine of the worship of *Christ*, founded on his true and eternal godhead, and it is this, that the scripture never recommends the worship of *Christ* upon this account, nor is there any one instance where it appears that he was worshipped as the supreme God : The scripture plainly puts it upon another foot, viz. "because the Father hath committed all judgment to him, therefore all men must honour him ; because God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of *Jesus* every knee should bow, &c. upon the account of his humiliation, and his obedience to death ; because God hath commanded, saying, let all the angels of God worship him ; and that the lamb is worthy to receive power and glory, &c. because he was slain, and has redeemed us to God." Now if his godhead were the true foundation of religious worship, it is strange,



say they, that this only foundation, this standing, and eternal ground of all that religious worship, which we are bound to give to *Christ*, should be so entirely overlooked in all the instances of it; and that the worship of him should be always put upon another foot. "Appeal," page 128, 129.

Answer I. I think it is not strictly true, that the godhead of *Christ* is never mentioned in scripture as the ground of his worship, *Psal.* xlv. 6. "Thy throne O God, is for ever and ever." And verse 11. the Psalmist addresses the church thus, "He is thy Lord, and worship thou him." His godhead and his lordship are both mentioned before the command of worship. See also *Psal.* xcvi. 1, &c. "*Jehovah* reigneth, let the earth rejoice; the hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, worship him all ye gods." Now both these passages of scripture are applied to *Christ*, *Heb.* i. 6, 8. "When he bringeth his first begotten into the world he saith, let all the angels of God worship him:" And unto the Son he saith, "Thy throne O God is for ever and ever." See more in *Psal.* cii. 15, 22, 24. *Isaiah* viii. 13, 14, &c. as before, page 525. Thus you see *Christ* is called *Jehovah* and God in those very places where his worship is required. That text in *Phil.* ii. 9,—11. where the human nature of *Christ* seems to be taken into the complex object of worship, as I shall shew afterward, that very text is borrowed from *Isa.* xlv. 23. where God, the only true God, the just God and Saviour, is represented as the object of religious worship, and that upon the account of his godhead as well as of his salvation: And therefore it is the same godhead that may lay a just foundation for the worship of *Christ* in those very places of scripture in the new testament, which require us to worship him as God-man, or mediator.

See further, *John* v. 23. where all men are ordered "to honour the Son even as they honour the Father." There are some characters which seem to imply godhead united to man in the context, viz. having life in himself, raising the dead, doing whatsoever the Father doth, &c. And if the last verses of *Jude* be a doxology given to *Christ*, he is there called the only wise God our Saviour, which is a sufficient ground for such a doxology. And I think the reasons which I have formerly given for the proof of this exposition, maintain a good degree of strength still, notwithstanding what has been said in opposition to it.

Answer II. As there are some scriptures under the old testament which demand the worship of God the Father on the account of his being the one true God, omniscient, omnipotent, and the Creator of all things; so there are other scriptures which demand the worship of him upon the account of the various benefits which he has bestowed upon *Israel*, viz. because he has brought them out of the land of *Egypt* and the house of bondage, because he has delivered and saved them, he is their redeemer and their king\*. It is the divine nature that renders God the Father properly

\* So it is said in the new testament, *Rev.* xix. 1, 2. "Salvation, and glory, and honour, to the Lord our God, for true and righteous are his judgments," *Rev.* iv. 11. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour, for thou hast created all things." Creation and judgment, truth and righteousness, are the reasons or motives given for the worship of the Father: But his divinity stands as the foundation of worship, whatever particular operations may be assigned as the reasons and motives of it. So *Christ* may be said to be worshipped because he is creator as well as judge, *John* i. 3. *John* v. 22, 23. yet his divinity lies at the bottom to support it.

perly capable of religious worship according to the scripture, but his various benefits are strong reasons and obligations upon all mankind, and especially upon his own people to worship him. These benefits do not add a new foundation for his worship, but add new obligations upon creatures to pay him divine adoration. These benefits do also determine and model the special forms and expressions of worship, paid to God the Father: He is to be worshipped, because he is God, but he is to be worshipped in this or that form of address, that is, as a deliverer, or saviour, &c. because he rescued and saved his people.

In like manner, as there are some texts of scripture which represent our Lord *Jesus Christ* as God, and which in the same place require or demand religious worship for him, so there are other places which shew us the obligations that lie upon us to worship *Christ Jesus*, and reveal to us the particular forms and language of worship in which we should address him, viz. "as the lamb that was slain and has redeemed us: as he that was obedient to the death, and died for us, and redeemed us to God with his blood." Though it is his deity still that renders him capable of religious adoration, yet some of the reasons and motives why we worship him, are derived from what his human nature has done.

It is a frequent thing with the scripture to represent our obligations to duty as derived from the benefits we receive; and to represent the object of our worship rather in his relation to us, and our dependence upon him, than in his own metaphysical nature and incomprehensible essence: And since the scripture has dealt thus in relation to God the Father, and his worship, no wonder that it speaks the same sort of language with regard to *Jesus Christ* when he is revealed as the object of our worship. We praise God the Father, because he has created us, *Psal. c. 3, 4.* and the Son, because he redeemed us, *Rev. v. 9, — 13.*

But that I may give the objection it's full weight and force, it may be replied here, That "not only our obligation to worship *Christ*, but even his right to receive our worship, seems to be given him by the Father, upon the account of his humiliation and obedience to death;" especially in that famous scripture, *Phil. ii. 7, 8, 9.* "He took upon him the form of a servant; he was found in the likeness of men; he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross: Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of *Jesus* every knee should bow, &c."

To this I answer, that in this passage the scripture seems to have a peculiar reference to the exaltation of the human nature of *Christ*, to become part of the complex object of worship in union with the divine. Now this was a honour of which the man *Jesus* seems utterly incapable, according to scripture, had he not been united to God. I say therefore, this text speaks of the worship of *Christ* as man in union with deity, and that not only because of the appropriation of all religious worship to God, but the very language in which this worship of *Christ* is expressed by the apostle, is taken from *Isa. xlv. 23;* where the true God or *Jehovah* assumes this worship; and the citation of it by *St. Paul*, both here and in *Rom. xiv. 10, — 12.* proves the godhead of *Christ*. But when this man who is united to God, had thus humbled himself, then the Father ordained him publicly to receive his proper share of that religious honour which is paid to God-man, or God dwelling in human nature. Then he was exalted as God-man and mediator, to be adored by all men: He might be worshipped before as God in his divine robes, if I may so express it, but now he must be worshipped in his meditorial robes, in his garments of flesh and blood. The public



lic right of the man *Jesus* to religious worship, as part of the \* complex person of the mediator, is here manifested to the world, as a reward of his sufferings. This seems to be the precise meaning of the apostle in this place, as far as I am capable of penetrating into it.

But the answer made to this present objection as well as to others drawn from *John* v. 22, 23. will derive further force and evidence from the following propositions.

Proposition VII. "The godhead of *Christ* hath assumed the man *Jesus* into an unspeakable and most intimate union with it self, which is generally called a hypostatical or personal union."

The scripture seems to express this in several places, as when *Christ* is called "God manifest in the flesh," *1 Tim.* iii. 16. when the "Word, who was God, is said to be made flesh," *John* i. 1, 14. He who was "of the seed of *David* after the flesh, is over all God blessed for ever," *Rom.* ix. 5. "In him dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily," *Col.* ii. 9. These scriptures have been sufficiently explained, and this proposition confirmed so far, that I shall not imploy myself any further in it here.

Proposition. VIII. "The complete person of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, or God man, is a proper and appointed object of the christian worship."

Though the divinity of *Christ* is the sole foundation of these honours, yet when this divinity has put on human nature, and received it into a personal union with it self, in order to become a proper mediator between God the Father and mankind, then the whole person God-man may receive the worship, and stand intitled to the religious honour.

I am so far from being singular in this sentiment, that it might be easily shewn to be the opinion of a great part of our protestant writers. The name of *Turretine* is well known in the learned world: In his "institutions of theology," Place xiv. question 18. section 10. he determines "the human nature of *Christ* to be the inseparable adjunct of the divine nature in the matter of adoration, and that it is adored together with the Word. And in section 12. he allows the whole mediator or God-man to be adored, though the human nature be not the formal and terminative object of worship. Section 14. Adoration does not more confound the two natures of *Christ*, and the honour due to them, than faith does; for as it regards *Christ*, both God and man, distinctly in one person, so it attributes to him according to both natures that which belongs to him. Section 15. Though the human nature or flesh of *Christ* is not adored by itself, or for itself, yet it is truly said to be adored in the Word, with whom it is personally united. And in section 11. Though it is the deity alone that makes the person of God-man adorable, yet *Christ* as mediator must be adored, and various motives to worship him are drawn from his mediation."

Doctor

\* Some may complain that I speak without caution here in calling the man *Jesus* a part of the complex person of our mediator, because the godhead of *Christ* is usually described as a complete person, and the human nature or man is reckoned only an adjunct or appendix to the second person in the trinity. I do not attempt here to refute this correction, nor will I insist upon the use of the word "part," if the word "adjunct" or "appendix" will better serve the various designs of this doctrine. Yet it may not be amiss to cite *Mr. Baxter* on this occasion, in his "paraphrase on *Col.* i. 16, 17." "The orthodox hold that *Christ* hath only two natures in one person, the divine and human. And of these the subtle philosophers say, that his human nature is no part of his person, but an adjunct, because God cannot be a part. But others avoid this, as dangerous." Thus you see in *Mr. Baxter's* opinion, some of the orthodox think it dangerous to deny the human nature of *Christ*, to be a part of his person. And *Turretine* confesses it to be a part of the person of the mediator, though it is but an adjunct of the "logos" or Word, or second person of the trinity. "Institutionis theologiae loci xiii. questionis sextae, et septimae." And after all, I think, this dispute would be a mere logomachy.

Doctor Oruan is of the same mind. See his "treatise of the person of Christ," page 152. "His divine nature is the proper formal object of our faith, but the entire person as God and man is the immediate object of it: We believe in him because he is God; but we believe in him as he is God and man in one person. All of Christ is considered and glorified in this acting of faith on him, and the benefits of his mediation are the special motives thereunto. Page 322. The human nature of Christ in his divine person, and together with it, is the object of all divine adoration and worship. Rev. v. 13. All creatures whatever do for ever ascribe "blessing, honour, glory, and power unto the lamb, in the same manner as unto him who sits upon the throne." But no other creature either is, or ever can be exalted into such a condition of glory, as to be the object of any divine worship."

I must confess there are some few writers that imagine it is the pure godhead of Christ alone is the single object of worship; and they are afraid to allow the united human nature to be considered as a part of the complex person worshipped, lest worship should seem to be given to any thing that is not God. I must own, that in treating matters so sublime we ought to be well upon our guard, lest while we would pay just honour to the man Jesus, we should take away some of the just prerogatives of his godhead: But on the other hand, we must learn what worship we ought to pay to Christ from the scripture itself, since it is a matter of pure revelation; and I should not readily allow the man Jesus to be taken into the complex object of worship, if the scripture itself did not seem to lead me to it, by the following considerations.

Consideration I. The worship of the complex person of our Lord Jesus Christ is represented as an appointed worship, and that \* partly as a honour bestowed upon him by the Father, by way of recompence for his sufferings, Phil. ii. 9. "Therefore God hath highly exalted him; and given him a name which is above every name." Now the pure godhead of Christ never did or could suffer; that is and always was worthy of our religious worship, had it never assumed human nature, had Christ never been obedient to the death, and never redeemed us. But the human nature may become part of the complex object of worship, by the appointment and gift of the Father, partly upon the account of it's sufferings. The man was first united to godhead with this very view and design, that he should suffer and die; and as his union to godhead renders him capable of religious honour, so his sufferings and death may be appointed in the counsels of God to lead the way to his actual enjoyment of it, or to some higher degrees of it.

Consideration II. It is the mediator Christ Jesus who is worshipped under his character as mediator. Now this office or character includes his human nature as well as his divine: Nay, it has a peculiar respect to his human nature, as St. Paul tells Timothy, for there "is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus," 1 Tim. ii. 5. The honour is paid to the "lamb that was slain, in the midst of the throne;" and the heavenly spirits worship him because he has fulfilled the office of a mediator, and "redeemed them to God with his blood," Rev. v. 9. The man Jesus is "appointed the judge of the world," Acts xvii. 31. and "all men are therefore obliged to honour him as they honour the Father, because he is the Son of man;" that is, the Messiah, with a connotation of his manhood, John v. 23, 27. It

\* I use the word "partly" to shew, that the man Jesus in union with godhead, might be appointed to be adored at his incarnation or before, and yet he might have a further claim to it given him upon his death and resurrection, and thus it may be said, "Therefore God hath highly exalted him," Phil. ii. 9—11. even as Jesus was beloved of God always, and yet he himself says, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life and take it again," John x. 17.



It is as mediator we are to believe or trust in him, and to call upon him: It is as God-man and mediator, that dying *Stephen* committed his soul to him, for he saw him with his eyes. *Christ* requires us to believe on him as the means, or method of obtaining salvation: Now it is not his pure godhead, but the person God-man who has purchased salvation, and who is exalted to bestow it, and therefore we must trust in this person, and call upon him under this character as God-man.

Consideration III. The very actions and sufferings of his human nature are chiefly mentioned in some of those places where honour and worship are not only appointed to him by the Father, but actually given him by the saints. When the apostle had described him as "man, the Son of man, or the second *Adam*," *Heb.* ii. 9. he adds, "We see *Jesus* who was made a little lower than the angels, for the sufferings of death crowned with glory and honour;" and accordingly this honour and this glory which he obtained by his death is paid in heaven, and ought to be paid him on earth. Heaven is full of this worship, and it is represented as given to the lamb by the whole creation, *Rev.* v. 13. and particularly by saints, and sometimes by angels, verses 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. "Worthy is the lamb that was slain, to receive honour and power," *Rev.* v. 13. "To him that has loved us, and washed us—in his blood, be glory and dominion for ever," *Rev.* i. 5, 6. "Because he was obedient to the death of the cross, therefore the Father has appointed that every knee shall bow to him," *Phil.* ii. 8, 9, 10.

Now if these three considerations are put together, they seem to give a sufficient confirmation of the sentiments of those two great men, doctor *Owen* and professor *Turretline* in this point, viz. That the whole complex person of *Christ* both God and man, is the true object of our worship.

Objection. "But how can it be that the divine nature or godhead can be the only foundation of worship, and yet *Jesus Christ* be worshipped as a complex person God and man? Is not this an allowance of religious worship to be given to a creature as well as to God?"

Answer. It is the complete person who is the proper object of worship; the man could never be worshipped, if he were not also God. But when godhead assumes a creature into so near a union as to make one person with itself, the religious honour may be paid to the whole person, without allowing religious honour to be paid to any mere creature\*. This may be explained by an example or two, whereby we may learn that what belongs not to any single nature in itself, may come to belong to it in union with another nature.

We may borrow one example from scripture, *1 John* i. 1, 2, 3. "The word of God, the eternal life which was with the Father, is said to be seen, and heard, and handled." Now if we take this "logos" or word in any sense whatsoever, it certainly signifies a most exalted spiritual being, and in itself it is not capable of being seen, being heard, being handled; so a mere creature, considered in itself, is not capable of religious worship. But when this "logos" is united to flesh and blood, then it makes one complex person, and thus it is seen, it is heard, it is handled: So the man *Jesus* being united to godhead makes one complex person, and thus receives its share of honour in the worship paid to the person of *Christ*. Yet still the foundation of religious

\* When I speak in any of my writings of worshipping that which is not God, and call it idolatry, I desire to be understood in this sense, viz. worshipping that which has not true godhead belonging to it, at least as a part of the compounded being or person. For though the human nature of *Christ* is not true God, yet it is worshipped, not in and by itself, but in and with the divine, and as a part of the complex nature of the mediator.

religious worship lies only in the godhead, to which the man *Jesus* is united, even as the foundation of corporeal attributes, seeing, hearing, handling, lies only in flesh and blood; to which the "logos" or divine Word is united.

But there is another example or similitude which perhaps comes nearer to the subject, and, I think, makes it evident beyond exception, how the divinity of *Christ* may be the only foundation of religious worship, and yet the man *Jesus* may be assumed into a kind of partnership. Let us survey and compare it in these several successive views. 1. Suppose a human spirit, in the world of separate spirits, had some intellectual excellencies above it's fellow spirits, it might receive human honours upon this account: So was the godhead of *Jesus Christ* supreme in the invisible world, and received religious honours. 2. Suppose this excellent human spirit assumed a beautiful and graceful body into union with itself, then this whole human person might not only receive human honours upon the account of it's intellectual excellencies, but it might receive addresses of human honour, because of it's beauty and graceful figure or motion: So the godhead of *Christ* having assumed the man *Jesus* into union with itself, this whole person might not only receive religious honours upon the account of it's divine perfections, but also on the account of the characters, graces, obedience, and sufferings of the man *Jesus*. Such honours are frequently paid to *Christ* in scripture. And yet further, as some of the particular forms of address made to this supposed whole human person, may be derived from some special properties, or graceful motions of the body; so some of the particular forms of address made to the whole person of *Christ*, are derived from the actions and sufferings of his manhood. The scriptural examples of worship paid to *Christ* manifest this. 3. The gestures of human honour, such as bowing the head or the knee, together with the acclamations or songs of human praise which are paid to this supposed human person, may be seen and heard with agreeable sensations by the human body as an animal, as well as noticed and accepted by the human spirit united to it: So the religious honours which are paid to *Christ* may be seen and heard, or known and observed by the man *Jesus* with special satisfaction, as well as they are noticed and accepted by the indwelling godhead united to him. 4. Yet the beautiful and graceful body considered apart from the human soul, is not capable of human honours, even as the man *Jesus* apart from the deity is not capable, according to scripture, of religious honours. 5. Therefore the whole foundation of human honours paid to this united soul and body, this complex human person, lies in the intelligent nature, or the soul: So the whole foundation of religious honours paid, or payable, to this united God and man, this complex person of *Christ*, lies in the divine nature or godhead, though some special reasons, motives, and forms of address may be borrowed from this human nature.

I know there may be a great deal of metaphysical controversy raised to perplex this, or any other representation of things: But if we will attend to this illustration, I think it sets the whole matter of the worship of *Jesus Christ*, God-man, in a fair and easy light; and yet at the same time maintains the foundation of religious worship payable to *Christ* to be laid in his divine nature.

Now, if we consider the worship of *Christ* as God-man and mediator in this manner of representation, it gives a natural and easy solution to many difficulties that have been proposed.

Particularly that objection derived from *John* v. 22, 23. "The Father has committed all judgment to the Son, that all men might honour the Son, as they honour the Father." Here some have said, "It were a most absurd interpretation, that the Father has committed all judgment to my human nature, that men might honour



my divine nature; for the divine nature receives nothing hereby, and is adorable on a much higher reason without it. Certainly the same subject is intended to be honoured, which is invested with authority from God, viz. the Son of man."

Answer. This is granted, that it is the same subject receives authority and receives honour; and it is no absurd interpretation to say, the Father has committed all judgment to my human nature being united to the divine, which union makes me capable of this office, that men might honour my human nature in union with the divine, which union renders the whole complex person capable of this honour or adoration. Though this objection might also be answered another way, as doctor *Waterland*, "defence II. query 16. page 381. *Christ* is not worshipped because God committed judgment to him, but God committed it to him for this purpose, that men might know the divinity of his person, and thereupon worship him." But in this solution of the difficulty, both the office and the worship seem to be attributed alone to the divine nature of *Christ*, and therefore I rather chuse the former solution.

A further inquiry will arise here, "Whether the human nature of *Christ* shares in the divine honours that are paid to his person.

Answer. Divine honour or worship may signify, either honour paid to a divine person, or else an acknowledgment of divine perfections. In the first sense the human nature may share in divine worship, in the second it cannot so properly. But,

To answer this more particularly, let us remember that the religious honours which are paid to the person of *Christ*, may be considered either as the ascription of divine perfections and operations to him, or as the ascription of human graces, perfections, kindneses, operations, or sufferings, or as the ascription of mediatorial offices, operations and benefits, which are the result of both divine and human natures.

Now I grant the human nature distinctly considered, cannot directly share in the ascriptions of divine perfections, though it may receive sensible pleasure in seeing divine honours paid to the godhead. But the human nature considered as a part of the complex person of *Christ*, may receive it's share of the ascription both of human and mediatorial characters and operations to this complex person, and derive a sensible satisfaction thence. For as we cannot suppose, that the human nature of *Christ* in this exalted state can be utterly ignorant of the knees that bow to his person, and the tongues confessing that he is Lord; so the man *Jesus* cannot chuse but have a sacred relish and complacency in these honours, as a reward of his sufferings, always referring them to the final glory of the divine nature. If *Jesus Christ* be worshipped as the lamb that was slain, and his human nature takes cognizance of these addresses, it cannot but receive it's own share of satisfaction from this knowledge.

If this proposition want further illustration, let us try if the following supposition will do it. Suppose God himself were clothed with a robe of light which had intelligence or consciousness in it; suppose in our addresses to God thus arrayed with light, we should be required to make honourable mention of that vesture of glory which surrounded him; might not this intellectual glory be said to receive honour or worship from us, as considered in union with the indwelling deity? And might it not take cognizance of this honour with delight and just approbation? Yet this intellectual glory, this conscious light, would by no means be a proper object of any such honours in itself, but merely by virtue of the indwelling God: And every degree of honour or satisfaction which it received would redound to the glory of God himself who dwelt in the midst of it. Thus God dwelling in the manhood of *Christ*, as in a vesture or tabernacle, is worshipped by men; and some of the addresses he receives

ceives are paid to him expressly as incarnate, and thus the manhood is conscious of, and receives it's own appointed share of the honour.

But these thoughts lead me on to the next proposition.

Proposition IX. "Since the design of the union of God and man in one person, was to render *Christ* a fit mediator, therefore the worship that is paid him may be considered either as ultimate, or as mediatorial, and it may in some sense be called either supreme or subordinate."

Religious worship may be considered with relation to it's foundation, which renders the object capable of it, and in this sense it may be always called supreme, for no person who has not true and proper godhead can demand religious worship.

But when worship is considered with relation to it's end or design, or has a peculiar respect to the character of *Christ* as mediator, then it may sometimes be called mediatorial or subordinate, for when *Christ* is worshipped in his mediatorial capacity, the design is, that he may fulfil some mediatory office for us, in order to bring us to God and heaven, or it is to give him thanks that he has done it.

Again, if the worship of *Christ* be considered with regard to the forms or modes of address, it may, perhaps, be called either ultimate and supreme, or mediatorial and subordinate. It was supreme and ultimate when he was worshipped in his appearances to the patriarchs as God almighty; it is the same when we pay him the honour of divine perfections residing in him, even the same divine perfections which are in the Father, and say, glory be to thy name, O *Jesus*, who art over all God blessed for ever. But it may be called mediatorial and subordinate when we trust in him, or intreat him to bring us near to God, when we call upon his name to bestow on us the grace and gifts he has received of the Father for us, or when we ascribe honour to him who has washed us in his blood; and reconciled us to God.

*Christ* considered explicitly as the second person of the trinity, or considered as God incarnate, perhaps has not always such honours paid to him in scripture as are supreme and ultimate in the highest and divinest sense. But this is not for want of dignity or deity in his complete person, but because *Christ*, the second person, or incarnate, is rather represented as a mediator in the new testament: And according to the oeconomy of the gospel, the forms of worship paid to him under this character, are rather mediatorial and subordinate: Whereas the forms of ultimate and supreme worship are generally appropriated to God in the person of the Father, as sustaining in that oeconomy the dignity and state of supreme godhead.

I confess, that in my book "of the trinity" I have followed some great writers, and allowed no different sorts or degrees of religious worship mentioned in scripture, nor any scriptural difference between supreme and subordinate religious worship. In so sublime and so difficult a subject we are too ready to follow the phrases and language of great writers without a due examination: I beg leave here to correct these expressions, and to explain my self according to the distinction which I have now proposed. I know of no subordinate worship in scripture with regard to the foundation of it, or that which renders the object capable of religious worship; this is the sense in which I meant all worship is supreme, that is, it admits no person to be the object of it who is not God; but there may be mediate or subordinate forms of worship paid to him that is true God, when in union with an inferior nature he condescends to take upon him the form or character of a mediator.

All the expressions of scripture which represent our "coming to the Father by *Jesus Christ*, or praying to the Father in his name, or giving thanks to God in the name of *Jesus Christ*, and offering the sacrifice of praise by him, that God in all things may be glorified



glorified through *Jesus Christ*." This language seems to signify mediate and subordinate worship, that is, religious honour paid to *Jesus Christ* as mediator, in order to make us and our services acceptable to God the Father. And when the man *Christ Jesus* is said to be exalted, that "at the name of *Jesus* every knee should bow, and every tongue confess, that *Christ* is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," it seems to imply this mediate or subordinate worship, that is, as to the special purpose and design of it, though at the same time this very man *Christ Jesus* is united to the divine nature, and by that means rendered capable of being worshipped as part of the complex person God-man.

There are two or three senses in which it may be said that *Christ Jesus* is worshipped to the glory of the Father.

I. As God the Father, or the godhead subsisting in the person and character of the Father, sustains the dignity of supreme God and sovereign Lord and governor in the oeconomical kingdom, as he maintains the rights and majesty of the divine nature, and transacts all it's affairs through his Son *Jesus Christ* as a divine medium; in this sense, though the divine nature to which the man *Jesus Christ* is united be the same with that in the Father, yet as it subsists in the person and character of the Father, it assumes supremacy, and all things are done to it's glory; and all that the man *Jesus* does, or enjoys, is to the glory of the Father, though the same united godhead capacitates him for these actions, honours, or enjoyments.

II. When *Christ* is worshipped, it is to the glory of the Father, because it is God: the Father has appointed this union of the man *Jesus* to the divine nature, whereby as a part of the complex person of the mediator he is made the object of religious worship. And,

III. As our addresses to *Jesus Christ* as mediator, or God-man, are performed by us with this design, that we may glorify the person of God the Father, or the divine nature in the character of supreme majesty and godhead.

Now that all this may be done without injury to the sacred doctrine of God alone being the proper or fundamental object of worship, I shall attempt to explain by this similitude. Suppose the usual and peculiar honour paid to *roman* emperors were prostration; suppose the emperor *Constantine* and his son possessed a complete equal share in the empire, and suppose *Caius* a common soldier had offended *Constantine* the father; then his son puts on the garments of a common soldier, makes a visit to *Caius* in the army, and promises him to become a mediator with his Father to reconcile him to the offending soldier *Caius*. Upon this view *Caius* falls prostrate, and pays the son imperial honours, and intreats him to fulfil this work of mediation, or gives him thanks for what he has done in it: He also addresses *Constantine* the father with prostration, or imperial honours, but comes in the name of his Son, and for his sake is admitted into favour. The son here receives imperial honour because he is still emperor, which is the foundation of it; yet the honour is but mediatorial and subordinate, because the design of it is to draw near to the father by the son. *Constantine* the father always receives imperial honours from *Caius*, which are ultimate and supreme, for he sustains the dignity and majesty of empire. The son, though equal in the empire, yet receives mediate honours, because he condescends to be a mediator: And yet the manner in which *Caius* pays these mediate honours, viz. prostration, is supreme and imperial, or shews the son to be an emperor too.

Thus the divine nature, as subsisting in God the Father, receives only supreme and ultimate honour from us sinners: But God, as vested with human nature, or the man *Jesus* united to godhead, receives mediatory honours, because the design of our ad-  
dresses

dress to him is to reconcile us to God the Father : Yet these mediatory honours are divine, and paid to him in a religious manner, so as at the same time to acknowledge his communion in the divine nature, and his oneness with God the Father. The person of *Christ* is partaker of religious and divine honours ; supreme, if you consider the foundation of them, but mediate, or subordinate, if you consider the design of them.

I am very unwilling, in writing on this sacred subject of divine worship, to oppose so great and excellent a defender of the divinity of *Christ* as doctor *Waterland*. He utterly denies, indeed, all mediate or subordinate worship, yet let it be noted that he allows *Christ* to be worshipped under the character and office of mediator ; but since as mediator he is God as well as man, he maintains it is divine worship is paid him under all his offices. “ He is a divine mediator, a divine priest, a divine prophet, a divine king ; and so our worship of him never wants it’s proper object, never moves from it’s proper foundation, but remains constantly the same. Our worship of *Christ* as a mediator does not hinder us from considering him as God at the same time, any more than our considering the Father as king, judge, preserver, or rewarder, hinders us from considering him also as divine.” I perfectly agree to these sentiments. All the worship that is paid to *Christ* may be called divine, because the complex object of it has a divine nature, yet I think it cannot always so properly be called supreme and ultimate ; because some of the addresses which are made to him who is God, particularly refer to what he has done, and to what he does, as man and mediator, which is a subordinate and not a supreme character. Nor can I see any inconvenience in calling this worship mediatorial or subordinate, especially since the new testament seems to give the most frequent precepts and patterns of that worship which is due to *Christ* in his mediatorial character rather than in his pure godhead.

I think we may maintain the deity of *Christ*, and the necessity of his deity to render him adorable, without denying that mediatorial worship which seems to be the most natural and obvious meaning of several scriptures. And even in the esteem of our opponents, it adds honour and justice to an argument against themselves, when we allow what may fairly be allowed, and do not strain the scripture from it’s most obvious meaning, in order to disallow and deny every thing which our opponents have some colour to assert.

Objection. There is no worship of God the supreme being, according to the gospel, but what must be offered through *Christ* as a mediator. “ No man comes to the Father but by me,” *John* xiv. 6. Now if *Christ* be worshipped with divine worship as God supreme, who can be the mediator ? So that when I worship him with divine worship as God, I must worship him without a mediator, which is not according to the gospel.

This objection may be answered two ways, viz. By considering *Christ* the mediator in his human nature, or in his divine.

Answer I. If we consider *Christ* in his human nature, he is an all-sufficient mediator to bring sinners into the favour of God, because he has done and suffered every thing that is necessary to procure peace ; and he is united to the divine nature, whence all his mediatorial actions and capacities receive their efficacy. The man *Jesus Christ* is a mediator between God and man, as the scripture expresses it, 1 *Tim.* ii. 5. and he may be addressed with religious worship, because he is united to God, or he is one with God : And yet he may be thus addressed without another mediator, for nothing, in the gospel forbids a sinner to worship God-man, or a man united to God, without any medium. Or,

Answer II.



Answer II. If we consider *Christ* the mediator in his divine nature, we may address him with divine and mediatorial worship without any other medium; for in the character of mediator, and as he is united to man, he is not that supreme offended majesty of heaven, which refuses access to sinners without a mediator. It is God in the person of the Father who sustains the supreme dignity and majesty of godhead, or the character of supreme governor; and it is in his person that the deity is dishonoured by the sins of men; therefore he is not to be approached under the gospel by offending sinners without a mediator: And the word Father is put with great propriety and emphasis into that text, *John* xiv. 6. "No man comes to the Father but by me." But the same God in the person of the Son or mediator, dwelling in the human nature of his Son *Jesus*, may be worshipped without a mediator; for in this view the godhead does as it were put off the character of supreme governor, by assuming human nature, by condescending to accept the work of reconciliation, and to sustain the office of a mediator.

The foregoing similitude will serve to illustrate this. The son of *Constantine* is emperor as well as the father, and is offended as well as the father, because the soldier *Caius* had broken the laws of the empire; and therefore the son will not admit *Caius* the offender to approach him, or come into his presence, when he is sitting on the imperial throne, assuming the character of emperor: But when he has put on the garments of a common soldier, that he may become a mediator, he gives *Caius* the offender leave to address him as a mediator, and thus reconciles him to the offended emperor, to *Constantine* his father.

Lest there should be any exception taken against this similitude, because *Constantine* and his son are two distinct beings, whereas the godhead of the Father, and the godhead of the Son is the same. I might represent the matter thus: Suppose there were but one single emperor of *Rome*, and call him *Augustus Caesar*, he may refuse to admit an offender into his presence, without a mediator, while he sits on the imperial throne, dressed in robes imperial; and yet *Augustus Caesar* himself may put on meaner raiment, may visit the offender in his own dwelling, and permit him to converse with himself though he be emperor, under the inferior character of a friend, that would willingly reconcile the offender to himself as emperor: Thus God in *Christ* is reconciling the world to himself. God in *Christ* may visit us offending sinners in our own dwelling on earth; he may permit us to address and worship him without any other mediator, though God in the person of the Father, and as supreme governor, would not suffer it.

There does not seem anything in all this, either unscriptural, or contrary to common reason; nor has it any thing in it so disagreeable to human ideas and customs, but it might lead us into a clear and intelligible conception of these divine mysteries, if we could but suffer our selves to receive such an explication of difficulties in divine matters, as may be borrowed from human affairs. And surely it is in such sort of human language that God in his word reveals to us the mysteries of salvation; and our blessed Saviour in this manner, by parables drawn from earthly things, represents to us things heavenly.

### C O N C L U S I O N.

I shall conclude this discourse with a short recapitulation of it under the following queries, and a remark or two on the common sense of the *arians* and the *trinitarians* about the worship of *Christ*.

Query I.

Query I. Is it not the constant custom, both of scriptural and heathen writers, to give the name of God to every thing that is made the object of religious worship, whether it be superior or inferior, whether it be one or many?

Query II. Is it not expressly forbidden in the first command to have any other God or gods, besides *Jehovah* the God of *Israel*, that is, to receive or admit any other object of religious worship?

Query III. Does not this command seem to be of everlasting continuance, by the repetition and establishment of it under the new testament, as well as by the peculiar and repeated solemnities of it's sanction under the old.

Query IV. Is not our blessed Saviour called God several times in the new testament, and is he not also represented as a proper object of worship, both in precept and example?

Query V. Does it not therefore appear a most natural consequence, that he is the true God? Or that *Jesus Christ* has such an union and communion with *Jehovah* the God of *Israel*, as to be called by the same names in their sublime sense, and to receive religious worship accordingly?

Query VI. Are there not some expressions in the new testament, where *Christ* seems to be exalted and advanced to receive religious worship, as a gift from God the Father, and sometimes as a reward of the sufferings of his human nature?

Query VII. Does not his human nature it self, according to the language of scripture, seem to be the more immediate object of this exaltation and reward, and to be admitted so far into a share of these honours as it is capable of receiving them?

Query VIII. May not this difficulty be solved, by supposing the man *Jesus*, by his most intimate union to, or oneness with *Jehovah*, or the God of *Israel*, to become one person with him, and thereby become a part of the object of religious worship, from which all other creatures are for ever excluded, because they have not this privilege of personal union with the divine nature?

#### THE REMARKS are these.

The doctrine of religious worship paid to the man *Jesus*, is acknowledged by the *arians*, and accounted for by the appellant, by supposing him to be exalted by the appointment of God the Father to this honour, though in truth he be only a creature or a being inferior to the true God; and by supposing the first commandment to be so far repealed under the new testament, as to admit of another object of worship, that is, another god besides the supreme God, the God of *Israel*. But this seems to be cutting the knot instead of untying it, and breaking through the great doctrines of the deity of *Christ*, and the perpetuity of the first command.

On the other hand, the man *Jesus* is excluded from all share whatsoever in religious honour or worship by some few trinitarian writers; and they determine those texts, wherein *Christ* is represented as exalted by the Father to this honour, to belong only to his divine nature considered as clothed with flesh and blood, and they explain them these two ways.

I. By supposing the divine nature in the person of *Christ* to be oeconomically, though not really inferior to the divine nature in the person of the Father, for he sustained the character of God's servant, angel, messenger, &c. and that God the Father has given the divine nature of *Christ* an oeconomical exaltation, or right to religious worship, both as dwelling in flesh, and as now publicly vested with regal authority, though it had really this right to divine worship before.

II. Since



II. Since the deity of the *Messiah* was not distinctly known to former ages, they suppose that after the sufferings and death of *Christ*, the Father has more clearly published his deity to the world, and has declared him to be one God with himself, and the proper object of worship. Thus God the Father's publication of the deity of *Christ*, as adorable, and of it's peculiar additional claim to our worship, since the sufferings of his human nature, is called, the exaltation of him to this worship on the account of those sufferings; as there are other things also said to be done in scripture language when they are only manifested.

These are the justest and fairest representations which I know of the common solution of this difficulty; and so far as the exaltation of *Christ* in those texts can relate to his divine nature, I concur with these sentiments. And indeed I should have acquiesced herein entirely, and sought no farther, if I had not found some expressions of scripture which seem to carry with them in their plain literal sense, an exaltation of the man *Jesus* to some peculiar religious honours: This inclined me to attempt a solution of this difficulty in a little different manner. Nor am I alone herein, for there are several great divines in this same sentiment, viz. That the "human nature of *Christ* is a proper part of the person of the mediator, and as such is joined with the divine nature in the religious worship and honours which are paid to *Christ* as God-man; so doctor *Owen*, *Turretine*, &c. as I have cited them under proposition viii. page 534.

But if it be found plainly inconsistent either with the deity of *Christ*, or with the first commandment, I still think it better to relinquish this attempt, and betake myself to the common explication of these difficult texts, rather than renounce the deity of *Christ*, or the perpetuity of the first command, which seem to be established upon so numerous and so evident proofs of scripture.

Yet after all, if these two different propositions are plainly revealed in scripture, viz. That religious worship belongs to God alone; and that the man *Jesus* as personally united to the godhead, is exalted to some kind of partnership in this honour, I would chuse to believe them both, since I do not see any evident contradiction in them, though perhaps I may not have hit upon the best way of reconciling them.

It is a general and excellent rule, that where two propositions are evidently true, we are not to reject either of them, because we cannot at present find the modus or manner how they are reconciled: I would be ever mindful of the weakness and narrowness of our understandings, and confess that there are some mysterious and sublime doctrines in the word of God, for whose farther explication we must wait till the "pouring down of the blessed Spirit from on high, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea; when the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun as the light of seven days."

In the meantime, if we yield our assent to what God has plainly revealed, and fulfil the practical parts of religion which God has plainly enjoined, we have no reason to doubt of our acceptance unto eternal life, and our safe removal and advancement to the upper blessed world. There we shall see the redeemer face to face, and have the mysterious glories of his sacred person revealed to us, that we may pay him such celestial honours as are required of all the worshippers in those holy and happy regions. And when we shall join together in that joyful song, "worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive glory and blessing, for he has washed us from our sins in his own blood, and redeemed us unto God," we shall then be fully apprized of the nature of that worship which we pay to our redeemer; and we shall no more dispute how far the man *Jesus* is admitted to a participation of these honours, who in union with the divine nature, is over all God blessed for ever. Amen.

D I S S E R-

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# DISSERTATIONS

Relating to the

## Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

THE SECOND PART.

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### *The P R E F A C E*

**I**T is not a matter of light or trivial concern to write upon the sacred article of the trinity. Many of the glories of our holy religion are derived from it, and so much of this doctrine as is necessary to the safety of our souls, is revealed with bright evidence in the word of God. The various and particular modes of explaining it can by no means be esteemed of equal importance with the doctrine it self: For men of wisdom and learning, and exemplary piety, have fallen into different sentiments in this attempt: And there will always be room for further enquiry, while we abide in this feeble and imperfect state. Here, in this world, we see but a glimpse of many of the deep things of God, and they are discovered to us but darkly as in a glass.

Yet we are encouraged by a prophet, *Hosea* vi. 3. "to follow on to know the Lord;" and are required by an apostle, *2 Pet.* iii. 18. to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of *Jesus Christ*." A diligent christian would seek daily to arrive at some clearer ideas of the great God, whom he adores, and the redeemer, with whom he has intrusted all his immortal concerns; especially, when we have just reason to believe, that there is much sacred truth which lies yet concealed in the mines of scripture, in the search whereof we may happily imploy our labour and meditation; and since we have also ground to hope for the promised assistance of the blessed Spirit of God, who is appointed to guide his people into all truth, and to glorify our Saviour, by "taking of the things of *Christ* and manifesting them to us," *John* xvi. 14.

And as we are encouraged by scripture to seek a further acquaintance with the mysteries of the gospel, so we are sometimes constrained to it by the importunate objections of our opponents. There are, and have been, many writers, who will not allow it to be possible in any manner whatsoever, that true godhead should belong to each of the blessed three. It seems proper therefore, for some persons to endeavour



to make it appear, that there is a possibility in the reason and nature of things, for true and eternal deity to be attributed to the Father, the Son, and holy Spirit, without danger of those absurdities and inconsistencies which are pretended to arise thence. And though the modus, or peculiar manner of explaining this difficulty, be not necessary for every christian to understand in order to his own salvation, yet the providence of God may sometimes make it necessary for those who are set for the defence of the faith, to explain and vindicate this great point, as far as the holy scripture furnishes us with any traces of divine light, and the powers of reason, under the conduct of scripture, can afford us any assistance. And to encourage our search we may reasonably hope, there are several things in the gospel which are not surrounded with such impenetrable shades and darkness, as the writings of men have sometimes represented them.

When I wrote that little treatise, intitled, the "christian doctrine of the trinity," my design then was, only to give a plain and general account of what representations the scripture made of the sacred three. And as my chief purpose in that book was to exhibit this doctrine to private christians in an easy view; so I declared in the title, that I had endeavoured to do this without the aid or incumbrance of any of those human schemes of explication, which had been contrived to solve the difficulties attending that doctrine. Yet it was no part of my intent utterly to renounce and abandon all those schemes, and methods of explication, which pious and learned men had already given us, or which might hereafter be found out to relieve these difficulties.

For though it might be possible, in some measure, to avoid the mixture of human schemes, when the only purpose of the writer is to lay down the doctrine of the scripture for the use of private christians, yet when an ingenious and learned author shall raise a variety of objections to obscure, refuse, and confound that which I call the scriptural doctrine it self, perhaps it is impossible to give a tolerable answer to those objections without entering into some particular scheme of explication, and shewing in what manner the sacred three may be one God, and thereby declaring in what manner those objections may be solved, and the difficulties removed.

Though I was not a stranger to the various human explications, when I wrote that treatise, yet I confess with freedom, I was not at that time engaged in any one particular scheme. I thought the general doctrine of scripture was plain and evident, but as to the modus of it I was much in doubt: And upon that account I must acknowledge this benefit which I have received from the author of the "sober appeal to a Turk or an Indian," which was written in answer to my book\*, viz. That by the arguments which he uses, he has almost precluded in my opinion some of those schemes of explication, and inclined my thoughts towards one particular mode of accounting for this difficult doctrine, which I have in a great measure exhibited in the following discourses.

Such as know little of these disputes, and have never ventured to read any thing but the writers of their own side, generally imagine that all things in their own particular scheme are clear as the light; and they are too ready to impute all the doubts or difficulties that are raised on these subjects to the want of a due regard to truth. They believe their own particular mode of explaining this great article with as firm a faith, and make it as sacred and divine as the article it self; and they suppose that their whole scheme is supported by all those scriptures which are made use of to prove the

\* Why I have not in these present dissertations proceeded farther in a reply to that writer, I have given an account at the close of the seventh dissertation.

the deity of the Son or Spirit. So unhappily has the christian world been taught to mingle human schemes with divine truths.

And I cannot but take notice here, if a man has never so sincere a design to vindicate the same great doctrines which are professed and maintained by his brethren, yet if he happen to step aside from the common track of human phrases, and especially if he give an exposition of some important scriptures different from their sentiments and the established interpretation, he runs the risque of having heresy cast on himself and his writings, ever while he labours by reasoning, and clear ideas, to defend those very propositions which they themselves believe.

I know it is a very difficult and hazardous undertaking, for a man to attempt to give a rational account of these mysterious parts of our religion, though he endeavour humbly to follow the track of scripture light; and there is much danger in it upon this account as well as others, viz. That what scheme of explication soever he follows, there are some hard names of modern or ancient error which lie ready to be discharged upon him. If he explain the trinity according to the ancient *Athanasians*, with bishop *Pearson*, bishop *Bull*, and Mr. *Howe*, he is censured perhaps as a down-right tritheist. If he follow the scholastic scheme, which has been professed by most of the reformed churches, and which has been commonly called modern orthodoxy, he incurs the charge of *sabellianism*. If he dare propose the doctrine of the pre-existent soul of *Christ*, and follow bishop *Fowler*, Mr. *Fleming*, and others, he is accused of favouring the *arian* and *nestorian* errors, even though all this time he strongly maintains the proper deity of *Christ*, and a sufficient personality in the sacred three to support their distinct characters and offices. It is hardly possible that the nicest care should exempt a man from these inconveniences: But I hope none of these things shall ever discourage me from the sincere pursuit of truth, nor provoke me to lay aside the exercise of christian candor and charity.

I think the doctrine of the proper deity of the Son and Spirit is supported by some convincing arguments drawn from the word of God, though the manner of explication is attended with much difficulty. Surely those who have well known the *arian* and *socinian* controversies, and have given themselves leave to be acquainted with the force of argument on all sides, must acknowledge that it would be an invaluable happiness to the christian world, if any hypothesis of explaining the trinity were current among us, which might have clear and distinct ideas affixed to it, that we might not be perpetually running to this refuge, "it is all mysterious and inconceivable, and therefore we must not search into it."

I should be very glad, if a man might be permitted to imitate the blessed work of angels, 1 *Pet.* i. 12; and might desire to look into the glorious things of *Christ*, without being suspected of a profane curiosity, or a violation of the faith. It is my opinion, that a fair, easy and intelligible scheme of the trinitarian doctrine, agreeable to holy scripture, would be the noblest and the securest guard against the *arian* and *socinian* errors, for then there would be no pretense to deny it.

A late anonymous writer on the "doctrine of the trinity" assures us, that "there is a number of men who are prejudiced against, and do reject this weighty article, and many reject christianity in general on it's account, because they are persuaded it is expressly impossible, or contradictory, and inconsistent with reason. Many men labour under so strong a prepossession that this mystery is impossible, that till they be cured of this prejudice, by a sensible demonstration of the possibility of that abstruse doctrine,"



doctrine, in some sense manifestly consistent with reason as well as scripture, no other arguments can have any effect with them, or be duly weighed by them."

This is one reason why I ventured into these enquiries; and if this great article could be well adjusted and represented in such distinct ideas as would remove all appearance of inconsistency, it would also better support protestant writers in their triumph over the inconsistent doctrines of popery, and particularly that of transubstantiation, without any fear of a retortion of the same charge upon our selves. I know the papists retort this charge without reason or justice; but it must be confessed also, that it would be a happiness if we could cut off all shadows or pretenses of occasion from those who seek this occasion against us.

Far be it from me to boast, that I have exhibited such a hypothesis here! I know there are some difficulties which attend my explication of things. All that I can say is, that I have made a humble essay toward it, and how far I have succeeded herein, must be left to the impartial judgment of those who will take the pains to read it, and honestly compare it with the word of God. As for the conviction, or silencing of all manner of opponents, I make no pretense to it. It is a very just observation of the learned doctor *Waterland*, in his preface to his sermons on the "deity of *Christ*," "that in such sublime subjects as these, and in such controversies as depend on the interpretation of dead writings, the objector has much the easier part, as it is always easier to puzzle than to clear any thing; to darken and perplex than to set things in a good light; and to start difficulties than to solve them."

Yet that I may not leave these dissertations utterly defenseless, I would attempt, in this place, to obviate a few exceptions that may be raised, though the reasons and foundations of them cannot be well understood till the discourses themselves have been perused.

Objection I. Perhaps it may be charged upon me, that I have not, in these dissertations, exactly confined my self, in every punctilio, to the same sentiments, which I had published some years ago, with relation to the doctrine of the trinity: And particularly, that though I continue to maintain the supreme deity of the Son and Spirit, yet, that I have expressed the doctrine of their personality in stronger, and more unlimited terms heretofore, than I have done in these papers.

Here let me first give one general answer, and then descend to particulars.

The general answer is this. When I apply my self with diligence to make further enquiries into the great doctrines of the gospel, I would never make my own former opinions the standard of truth, and the rule by which to determine my future judgment. My work is always to lay the bible before me, to consult that sacred and infallible guide, and to square and adjust all my sentiments by that certain and unerring rule. It is to this supreme judge of controversies that I pay an unreserved submission, and would derive all further light from this fountain. I thank God, that I have learned to retract my former sentiments, and change them, when upon stricter search and review, they appear less agreeable to the divine standard of faith.

Though a sentence or two from any man's former writings may be cited, perhaps, to confront his later thoughts, yet that is not sufficient to refuse them. All that it will prove is this, that that man keeps his mind ever open to conviction, and that he is willing and desirous to change a darker for a clearer idea. It will only declare to the world, that he can part with a mistake for the hope of truth, that he dares confess himself a fallible creature, and that his knowledge is capable of improvement. It becomes the all-wise God, and not mortal man, to be unchangeable. It doth not belong to such poor imperfect beings, as we are, to remain for ever unmoveable in all

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the same opinions that we have once indulged, nor to stamp every sentiment with immortality. For a man to be obstinately tenacious of an old mistake, and incorrigibly fond of any obscure phrase or conception, because he has once admitted it, is the shame, and not the glory of human nature.

The particular answers to this objection, relating to the personality of the Son and Spirit, are as follow, viz.

Answer I. My design in writing the "christian doctrine of the trinity," was to represent in the plainest manner, what appeared to be the most obvious ideas of scripture concerning the sacred three, for the use of private christians. And as I supposed both their deity, and their personality, to be plainly exhibited in the letter of the scripture, I represented them both in that manner in that little book, without so great a solicitude about reconciling the difficulties arising thence, as may be necessary for a person who undertakes further to explain that sacred doctrine, and to vindicate it against the exceptions of learned men.

I think it also proper to acknowledge, that I was at that time inclined to suppose those personal representations in scripture, especially so far as relates to the blessed Spirit, were really to be understood in a more proper and literal sense, than I now find necessary; and on that account I did then express the doctrine of three persons, or three distinct intelligent agents, in terms a little stronger, and more unlimited, than my judgment now approves. For since that time I have more carefully considered the *jewish* idioms of speech, wherein powers, virtues, and properties, are frequently personalized, or represented in a personal manner.

Answer II. As it was my purpose, in that little treatise, to shew, that the scripture ascribes deity and personality, both to the Word and to the Spirit, for the business of my present dissertations, is to shew, how these two may be reconciled. Now, if personality and deity can scarce be fairly explained, and happily reconciled in a proper literal sense, I think it much more agreeable to scripture, to explain the deity ascribed to the Word and Spirit in a proper and literal sense, and to explain the personality in a figurative manner, than to construe the deity of the Word and Spirit into a mere figurative godhead, and sink their character into that of two creatures, in order to maintain their literal and proper personality.

Answer III. Let it be further considered, that the common scholastic explication of the doctrine of the trinity, which for some centuries hath been called orthodox, makes the difference between the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, to consist in mere internal relative properties. This is the term which is generally used to describe their distinct personality: Whereas the present scheme which I offer, supposes the Word and Spirit to be analogous to real distinct powers in the divine nature. Now a real distinction is something greater than that which is merely relative. I hope therefore, that those trinitarians at least, who give their assent to the common orthodox scheme, will have no reason to charge me with making a less distinction between the divine persons than they do.

Objection II. Some persons, who pay a very great respect to the primitive christian fathers, may blame me, perhaps, for those parts of the fourth dissertation, wherein I allow so many of the inferior and diminutive expressions of those ancients concerning the "Logos," to be construed in their own proper literal sense, and apply them to the human soul of *Christ* in it's pre-existent state.

Answer. Let it be observed in the first place that I have every where allowed the greatest, the brightest, and the strongest expressions of the ancients, concerning the true and proper godhead of our Saviour, to be construed according to their proper and genuine sublime ideas. I reverence the name and memory of bishop Bull, and  
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bishop *Pearson*, whose excellent writings have effectually proved, that those primitive fathers did generally believe the true and eternal deity of *Christ*. And I pay all due honours to the learned labours of the reverend doctor *Waterland*, and doctor *Knights*, who have supported the same cause, and have given me an occasion to review the writers of the most early ages of christianity, whereby I have had the pleasure to find such a number of citations applied in this controversy with great justice; and it must be confessed, that they have so far exhausted this subject, that I could meet with very few expressions of importance on this theme, in those ancients which I consulted, which had not been cited in some of their writings, or the writings of their learned antagonists. I have therefore struck out many of the citations that I had made, both relating to the divinity, and to the inferior nature of *Christ*, that I might not too largely repeat what had been done before: And would rather remit the reader to those worthy authors who have plentifully given us the various expressions of the fathers in this controversy.

I thankfully acknowledge the profit I have received from the labours of those who with so much skill and learning have defended the common faith: And heartily declare my agreement with them, that the doctrine of the godhead of *Christ*, was asserted and maintained by the fathers of the christian church. Yet with all due deference to their superior worth, I humbly take leave to answer the objections which the modern disbelievers of his proper godhead have derived from the fathers, in another manner than most \* of these writers have done. Their arguments for the deity of *Christ*, are, in my opinion, strong and conclusive; but surely it may be lawful to attempt the relief of difficulties in another way and manner, since their opponents have ever denied their solution of them to have been satisfactory.

While we all agree to support the same doctrine of the deity of our blessed Lord, I think every man may be also permitted, without offence, to solve the objections that are brought against this doctrine, in such a various manner as is most suited to our different apprehensions of things; and by such a variety of solutions the doctrine is self, perhaps, may be better guarded against assaults on every side.

To conclude, I have nothing more to request of my readers, but that they would give themselves leave to peruse these dissertations with due attention, and without prejudice, or not to peruse them at all. That they would not take offence at every inaccurate expression, and condemn the whole work for some incidental mistakes. I entreat that they would not set their invention at work, to oppose as fast as they read, lest such a temper should bar all the avenues of the soul against conviction and evidence. That must be glaring evidence indeed, and an argument of prodigious power, that forces its way into an unwilling mind; I pretend to no such skill or demonstration.

If I have set any part of this subject in an easy light, agreeable to reason and scripture, I hope there may be some readers disposed to receive it. I entreat them to believe that it is possible for some of them to have been mistaken, as well as my self, in our former modes and schemes of explication of this great doctrine of the trinity, though the doctrine it self stands unshaken, and our assent to it as firm as ever. It is possible that an article which has had so many difficulties and obscurities attending it

\* I say, most of these writers; for I know not any of them who has laid a foundation for the answer of these difficulties in the same manner as I have done, except the reverend author of the "considerations on Mr. *Whiston's* historical preface," in his first and second letters to the author of the "history of montanism," whose expressions on this subject, in several parts of those letters I have here cited, in proper places, with all due respect.

it in all ages, may be a little further cleared and disintangled by labour and prayer, and the daily study of the holy scriptures. And if the blessing of God shall so far attend these feeble endeavours, as to lead any of my fellow christians into clearer and more defensible ideas of these deep things of God, let them join with me, and give the glory to God the Father, and his Son *Jesus Christ*, who, according to the divine oecomeny, instructs humble enquirers by the blessed Spirit.

But if it appear that I am mistaken in this hypothesis, I shall be very ready to receive a happier scheme of explication, wherein the doctrine of the sacred three may be represented, both in their divine nature, and distinct personality, in a clearer light, and whereby this doctrine may be rescued with more glory and power from all the attacks that have been made upon it. Happy are the souls above, who see God face to face, who behold the sacred three in that divine light, where objections and darkness are banished for ever, and the shadows are fled away! The noise of controversy and wrangling is never heard in those regions; but if it were possible for the happy inhabitants to differ in sentiment, and controversy could ascend thither, I am persuaded it would be managed without wrangling or noise. The gentleness and benevolence, the sweet serenity and candor that adorn every Spirit there, would reign through all their sacred reasonings; and wheresoever a mistake was found, and rectified, among those holy disputants, the voice of joy and triumph would be heard on all sides at the bright and lovely appearance of truth. O that the disputes of christians on earth might be carried on with the same heavenly candor, and might end in the same harmony and joy! Amen.

May 8, 1725.

DISSER-





# DISSERTATION IV.

The sentiments of the ancient *jews*, and primitive christians concerning the LOGOS, or WORD, compared with scripture.

## S E C T I O N I.

*The general senses of the term Logos, and it's application to Christ.*

OUR blessed Saviour hath a variety of names and titles given him in scripture, to describe his personal glories, and his sacred offices in the divine oeconomy. These must be borrowed from human things, and from the languages of men, in order to bring them within the reach of our understandings. We cannot frame ideas of things divine and heavenly, as they are in themselves, and therefore it hath pleased God to condescend to lead us into some imperfect conceptions of them, by revealing them to us, under the names and resemblances of things on earth.

The Logos, or Word of God, is a name whereby *Christ* is often represented in the new testament, and particularly in the writings of *St. John*. Now it may assist us considerably in tracing out some of the glories of his person, if we search into the meaning of this name, and the reason of it's application to our blessed Lord.

The term LOGOS, in *greek* heathen authors, does not only signify word, but it is used as commonly to express reason. In this sense the *platonick* philosophers apply it to God as well as man.

And not only the ancient *greeks*, but *Philo the jew* uses the term "logos" in this latter sense, even when it is applied to God; and denotes hereby the reason, or wisdom of God. In his treatise "De mundi opificio," he tells us, that the idea by which God made the world, and which he calls the κόσμος νοητός, or the κόσμος ἐκ τῶν ἰδεῶν, that is, the ideal, or intelligible world, could have no place but in the logos of God, as an intelligible or ideal city is in the mind, or reason, of the architect. And he adds a little afterward, that if a man will use plain words, he will say, the ideal world is nothing else than the logos of God the Creator; as an ideal city is nothing else than the reasoning of the builder; ὁ τῷ ἀρχιτέκτονι λογισμὸς. And this opinion, saith he, I have from *Moses*, and not from my self. The archetypal exemplar, the idea of ideas is the logos, the word, of God. He sometimes supposes it to be a divine power, or δύναμις, that regulates or conducts the agency of other powers, viz. principality and goodness, which office particularly belongs to the divine reason, or wisdom. And in several places of his writings, he seems to put such a sense upon this term, the logos of God, as we most properly refer to divine wisdom, or reason.

It is plain also, that several of the primitive christian writers include, if not chiefly intend, the idea of reason, in some places where they speak of that divine logos, which



which was always with God, even from eternity: For it was a common notion among them, that God was always λογικός, that is, rational; never ἀλογος, or ἀσυνετός, that is, never irrational, never without his word, or, rather, his reason, or wisdom. *Tertullian* makes the logos to be eternal, as it signifies reason; and more ancient than the logos, as it signifies a word, or speech: His language is this, "Non sermonalis Deus à principio, sed rationalis Deus etiam ante principium." That several of the *greek* fathers speak of the logos, as divine wisdom is manifest; and that some of the *latin* fathers, both elder and later, use the terms "ratio" and "sapientia," to express the logos, as well as "verbum," or "sermo," I suppose will not be denied.

And even in scripture, the term logos sometimes seems to denote reason as well as word; for *Christ*, who is the Logos, or Word of God, in several scriptures, is also supposed to be represented by divine wisdom in other places of the sacred writings, both in the old and new testament: As *Prov.* viii. where wisdom is described, which whole chapter is generally interpreted concerning our blessed Saviour, in his pre-existent state. *Luke* vii. 34, 35. "The Son of man is come eating and drinking, and ye say, behold a wine-bibber, &c. but wisdom is justified of her children." *Luke* xi. 49. "Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets, &c." that is, the eternal word or wisdom, by whom God transacted his affairs of the government of the *jewish* church.

And, indeed, there is a plain affinity between both these senses of "logos;" for a word or speech, is but the external representation of inward thought or reason; and reason it self is but a sort of internal speech, or the language of the mind. Thus by one we speak inwardly to our selves, and by the other we speak to other persons. And therefore *Christ*, who is the divine wisdom, *Prov.* viii. is also the divine Word, *John* i. manifesting the wisdom of God; and the name "logos" implies both. So *Calvin*, both in his institutions, and his commentaries on *John* i. 1. represents *Christ* as the Logos, partly because he is the wisdom of God, and partly because he reveals the mind of God to men. *John*, saith he, calls the Son of God, "sermo, quia primum æterna sit dei sapientia et voluntas, deinde expressa consilii ejus effigies." And many other writers are of the same mind.

Yet I think in our theological discourses on the *Messiah*, since we have not one single term in *english* that signifies both reason and word, it may be proper generally to translate logos by the term Word, rather than reason.

I. Because the scripture in the new testament seems rather to favour this sense: For the same things which are attributed to logos in some scriptures, are in other places ascribed to ῥῆμα: Now ῥῆμα always signifies word.

II. Because the same term logos is used by the *jewish* writers to translate their *memra*, which properly and literally signifies a word, and which is much used in their theological writings. If we enquire into the origin of it, perhaps it may be this, viz.

*Moses* relates the work of each day in the creation, to be performed by God's speaking, *Gen.* i. "And God said," This might give them the first hint or notion of the word, or memra, as a medium of God's manifestations and operations. And, perhaps, it might be thus designed by the Spirit of God, since it appears that succeeding inspired writers copied after *Moses*. *Psal.* xxxiii. 6. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made." *Psal.* cxlviii. 5. "He commanded, and they were created." *Psal.* cxlvii. 15, 18, &c. "He sendeth forth his word, and melteth the ice." *Psal.* cv. 19. "The word of the Lord came and tried *Joseph*." And the frequent mention of the word of the Lord in the old testament, which came to the patriarchs and prophets, might

might give the jews further occasion to speak of the "memra," or word. Such ancient divine hints probably introduced this term so often into their theology, and by that means into the writings of the new testament.

III. Another reason why we interpret logos, the Word, is because this has been the most frequent translation of logos in most places, by the writers of the christian church, in all ages; which has something of weight in it, where we can see no sufficient ground to change.

IV. Because when logos is translated word, or speech, it includes reason: But reason does not include word.

V. The term word is more adapted to signify both the human and divine natures of *Christ*; whereas reason, or wisdom, seems rather to refer chiefly to his divine nature, as will appear in the following parts of this discourse. And, indeed, where the divine nature alone is intended, I cannot think it amiss, in some cases, to imitate some of the fathers, and former writers, and to translate it reason, or wisdom; as in other cases it should be construed the Word.

But let us more particularly consider the import of the term logos, when it signifies a word, and the reasons of the application of it to *Christ*.

Logos, or word, when used in human affairs, is a declaration of our mind or will; and when it is taken for a word of command from a superior, it becomes also a medium of operation as well as manifestation. And so when it is used in a divine sense, it primarily and properly denotes some declaration of the mind or will of God; but if it be put for a word of divine efficacious command, then it denotes a medium of divine operation.

Therefore when the term "word" is taken personally as well as divinely, it must denote some glorious person, by whom God reveals himself, his mind and will to creatures, and by whom he operates. In short, it is a personal representation of some glorious medium of God's manifestations and operations.

Now this character eminently agrees to our blessed Saviour: And it is reasonably supposed, that it is upon these accounts chiefly he is so often called the Logos, as it signifies Word.

I. As he was the medium of divine manifestation. So *Irenæus* speaks, libro ii. capite 56. "The Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ* is revealed and manifested to angels and arch-angels, to principalities and powers, and to men by his Word, who is his Son: The Son reveals the Father to all to whom the Father is revealed." So *John* i. 18. "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

II. As he was a medium of divine operation. So *Irenæus* expresses himself, "The Word ministers to the Father in all things: He made all things by his Word;" libro iv. capite 17, 37. So *St. Paul* and *St. John* explain each other, when they describe God the Father, as creating all things by his Word, and by *Jesus Christ*, *John* i. 3. *Eph.* iii. 9.

Upon a review of the whole we find, that the logos is the divine wisdom it self, a revealer of the divine wisdom, a medium of divine manifestations and divine transactions: And on these accounts it is probable, that our blessed Saviour first obtained, and still keeps the name of Logos, or Word, since his incarnation, as well as before.

*Christ* is called the Logos in his incarnate state, *1 John* i. 1, 2. The Logos, or "Word of life, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled." *Rev.* xix. 13. he is represented as "clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called the Logos or the Word of God." Nor does



the apostle *John* only use this language, but the evangelist *Luke* seems to speak the same dialect, in the second verse of his gospel, when he calls the apostles eye-witnesses, and ministers of the Logos or Word: For if the term Logos be not taken in its personal sense, it is an improper way of speaking, to call them eye-witnesses instead of ear-witnesses.

It is manifest also, that the term Logos has sometimes a peculiar reference to our blessed Saviour, considered as distinct from flesh and blood, and is so used in those scriptures which speak of him in his pre-existent state. The beginning of St. *John's* gospel puts this beyond all doubt, if there were no other testimony. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. By him were all things made, and without him was nothing made that was made:" And this "Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory," *John* i. 1, 2, 3, 14.

There are many other places also, which may be fairly and reasonably interpreted concerning our blessed Saviour, as expressed by the term Logos, which Mr. *Fleming* reckons up, "Christology," volume I. page 155, &c. As, *John* v. 58. "Ye have not the Word of God, or Logos, abiding in you; for whom the Father has sent, him ye receive not." *Titus* i. 2, 3. "God who had promised eternal life of old times, hath now manifested his Word, or Logos, through preaching." *Heb.* iv. 12, 13. "The Logos, or Word of God is quick and powerful,—a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart: Nor is there any creature that is not manifest in his light." 2 *Pet.* iii. 5. "By the Logos, or Word of God, the heavens were of old; and by the same Word the heavens and earth, are now kept in store, reserved unto fire." 1 *John* v. 7. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one:" With some other texts.

## S E C T I O N II.

*A difficulty mentioned, with a proposal for the solution of it.*

NOW concerning this "logos," or the pre-existent nature of *Christ*, or rather concerning *Christ*, or the Logos, in his pre-existent state, there are such glorious ascriptions given to him, as seem to raise him above the character of all creatures, viz. "That he was God;" *John* i. 1. "that all things were created by him and for him, whether in heaven, or in earth; that he is before all things, and by him all things consist;" *Col.* i. 16, 17. "that he upholds all things by the word of his power; that all the angels of God must worship him; that his throne, as God, is for ever and ever; and that in the beginning he laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of his hands, &c." *Heb.* i. 3, 6, 8, 10.

Yet in these very places of scripture, as well as in several other texts, there are some expressions, which seem to represent him, even in his pre-existent state, below the dignity of godhead: As, when he is called the Son of God, and said to be begotten of the Father; which seems to denote too much derivation and dependence for pure deity: When he is said to be appointed the heir of all things by his Father: When he is called the first-born of every creature, and the beginning of the creation of God; when he is said to be sent by his Father, not to do his own will, but the will of him that

that sent him; that he had a body prepared him by the Father; that the Son can do nothing of himself: And many other expressions of the same kind.

Now here lies the difficulty, how shall we interpret all these expressions in a consistency with each other? This has been a perplexing and laborious inquiry in all ages of christianity.

Most writers fix their eyes and thoughts so entirely upon the divine dignity of the person of *Christ*; and out of a holy fear of sinking his character below godhead, have explained many of these diminishing expressions, as mere oeconomical accounts of his sublimest nature, and attributed even these lessening characters to *Christ* considered as God, by the help of tropes and figures, by *catechreses*, and oeconomical interpretations.

On the other hand, there have been some, who out of a sacred veneration for the supreme majesty of God the Father, and in order to secure the unity of the godhead, have sunk all the sublimer and divine characters given to *Christ*, or the Logos, in his pre-existent state, and reduced them to some diminished and figurative sense, in order to reconcile them to the inferior characters of *Christ*; and thereby they have not suffered the person of *Christ*, in any sense, to arise to the true dignity of godhead.

This has been a matter of dreadful contest in the churches of old, and has been again revived in the present age. The scriptures have been consulted through and through, by each party; and yet there are some difficulties still attending the sacred subject, and the parties are not reconciled.

I grant that scripture is the best interpreter of itself, and by comparing one part of the word of God with another, we are led into the meaning of many a difficult text, and find out many an important truth: And, in my esteem, the foregoing difficulties are resolved by the scripture itself. But when persons have employed their labour in this manner, and there still remains a darkness in their opinion, upon the language of scripture, they may, perhaps, derive some degrees of light, by consulting the authors that wrote on the same subject, and lived nearest to that age when the scriptures were written.

And since the christian religion is built upon the same general foundations with the *jewish*; and the new testament is a divine comment upon the old, perhaps we may borrow some advantages for the interpretation of dark passages in the gospel, from the modes of speech, and the common sentiments of the *jews* in that age; as well as from the primitive fathers of the christian church, who lived nearest to the apostolic times.

It may be also observed, that the sacred writers of the new testament, were *jews* themselves; and though they were converted to the faith of *Christ*, yet it is very evident, that they used several peculiar words and phrases, according to the sense and meaning of their country-men, and brought several of the idioms of the *hebrew* language into their *greek* writings: This is agreed among all the learned. Upon these accounts the ancient *jews*, as well as the first christians, may give us their assistance toward the better understanding of these terms and expressions, "the Word of God," the "Son of God, &c." and add some light to that doctrine which we derive from scripture.



## SECTION III.

*The sentiments of the ancient jews concerning the "logos," viz. the apocryphal writers, the targumists, and Philo the jew.*

Since Logos, or the Word, is a name frequently given to our blessed Saviour, by the sacred writers of the new testament; since he is also called the Son of God frequently: Let us therefore enquire a little what sentiments the ancient jews had of this matter, and what they meant by the Logos; and in what sense he is the Son of God.

The books of the old testament speak of the Son of God. *Psal.* ii. 7. "Thou art my Son." *Psal.* lxxxix. 27. "I will make him my first-born." *Prov.* xxx. 4. "What is his name, or what is his Son's name?" They speak also of the word and wisdom of God, which the ancient christian fathers understood as denoting *Christ*. *Prov.* viii. where he is called wisdom, has been cited already. See *Psal.* xxxiii. 6. where the "heavens were made by the word of God." *Psal.* cvii. 20. "God sent forth his word and healed the people, &c." Which word the seventy *jewish* interpreters call the logos.

Upon this account the *jewish* writers of the apocryphal books, speak of the word and wisdom of God in the same manner. *Eccclus.* i. 1, 4, 5, 9, 10. "all wisdom cometh from the Lord, and is with him for ever. Wisdom hath been created before all things: He poured her out upon all his works. The word of God in the highest, is the fountain of wisdom. Πηγή σοφίας λόγος Θεὸς ἐν ὑψίστοις: By which, it is probable, the author does not mean the written word, but the logos, or word that dwells on high. Verse 10. "She is with all flesh according to his gift." Now these expressions are very much akin to the beginning of St. *John's* gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. All things were created by him. This is the light that lighteth every man who cometh into the world." So in the book of *Wisdom*, chapter xvi. 12. "It was neither herb, nor mollifying plaister, that restored them to health; but thy word, O Lord, which healeth all things." So *Wisdom* xviii. 15, 16, 17. "Thy almighty word \* leaped down from heaven, out of thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war, into the midst of a land of destruction, and brought thy unfeigned commandment as a sharp sword, and standing up filled all things with death; and it touched the heaven, but it stood upon the earth." *Wisdom* ix. 1. "O God of my fathers, who hast made all things with thy word." Verse 4. "Wisdom sitteth by thy throne." And chapter vii. 21, &c. "Wisdom is called the breath of the power of God; a pure influence flowing from the glory of the almighty; the worker of all things; the brightness of the everlasting light; the image of the goodness of God." To which it is supposed the apostle might allude, *Heb.* i. 3. "when he calls *Christ*, "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person." And it is probable that the author of *Ecclesiasticus* gives an intimation of the Son of God, chapter li. 14. "And I called upon the Lord, the Father of my Lord."

From all these citations we may derive this degree of light, that the writers of the new testament, do not imitate the language of *Plato*, or other heathen philosophers, when they describe the logos, the word of God, or his wisdom, and that sometimes

\* This almighty word, Λόγος παντοδύναμος, may mean the essential divine word; or it may be referred to the glorious archangel called Logos, armed with almightiness by the indwelling godhead, that is, the angel of the covenant, who is also *Jehovah*, and true God. Of which hereafter more particularly.

times in a personal manner; but rather that they follow the language of scripture, and of the *jewish* church: And that they had many hints from the old testament itself, as well as from their traditional expositions of it, as doctor *Allix* informs us, that their great expected *Messiah* was to be the Son of God, and the Word of God, as being the fittest characters of a person who was to represent the wisdom and grace of God amongst them; and to be an illustrious medium of divine manifestations and operations.

It is allowed, indeed, that *Plato* may call the divine impressions on the works of nature, λόγος, or words; and he speaks of the λόγος, the word, or reason of the Creator; but is much more probable from ancient history, that *Plato*, and other *grecians*, borrowed that term from converse with the *jews*, or their neighbours the *phoenicians*, and the *chaldeans*\*, than that the *jews* should borrow it from him or them; or that St. *John*, who was a poor *jewish* fisherman, should be acquainted with the *grecian* learning of the gentiles, and imitate their phrases, when the same phrases were more common and ancient in his own nation.

I proceed now to consider what we find concerning the Word, and the Son of God, in the *jewish* commentaries on scripture, which are called the *targums*.

Here I shall make a free acknowledgment, that what I cite upon this occasion, is borrowed chiefly from doctor *Allix*, doctor *Owen*, doctor *Lightfoot*, Mr. *Ainsworth*, and Mr. *Fleming*. My acquaintance with the *chaldean* or *rabbinical* language, was never sufficient to read the rabbies, or their comments on scripture: But I may reasonably presume, that these learned authors have made faithful citations from these *jewish* writers, and given a just account of their sentiments.

The *targums* are paraphrases, or explanations of several parts of the old testament, in the *chaldean* language, written by *Onkelos*, *Jonathan*, &c. The exact time of their writing is not agreed amongst the learned, but generally supposed to be in the same century wherein *Christ* lived, or at least in the next century following: They speak very frequently concerning the "memra," or the Word of God, which is the same with the "logos," and they make it to signify these several things.

I. The word, or "memra," in these writings, often signifies God himself. There is a great number of places, in which when the *hebrew* bible declares that God, or the Lord, spake or acted any thing, these commentators ascribe those speeches, actions, &c. to the "memra," or word. It was the voice of the word † of the Lord God walking in the garden, that *Adam* heard: It was the word of the Lord was with the lad *Ismael*, and helped him in the wilderness. It is by the word of the Lord their God I will save them, says the *targum*; where *Hosea* says, "I will save them by *Jehovah* their God," *Hosea* i. 7. It was the word that saved *Noah* in the time of the flood, and made a covenant with him. It was the word brought *Abraham* out of *Chaldea*, and commanded him to sacrifice, and in whom *Abraham* believed. It is the

\* *Grotius* on *John* i. 1. affirms, "that the *grecians* cite the creation of the sun and moon, by the word, out of the ancient books of the *chaldees*:" And that the writer of the *orpheic* verses, thence borrowed his Θέος λόγος, and his αὐτὴ πατρὶς, the divine word, and the voice of the Father, whereby he made the world. That learned author, Mr. *Theophilus Gale*, in his "court of the gentiles," part II. book iii. chapter 3, and 9. has shewn at large how *Plato* borrowed his notions originally from the *jews*, by the *pythagoreans*, the *egyptians*, and *phoenicians*: And many other very learned men have been of the same mind.

† This is the first place in the bible where the *targums* mention the "memra" of *Jehovah*; and it is remarkable, that the text itself mentions the "voice of God walking," before any word was spoken: Whence doctor *Owen* infers, that this expression may denote, the essential word of God, the person of the Son. See "first volume on *Hebrews*," page 114, and 116.



the word that redeems *Israel* out of *Egypt*, and against whom *Israel* murmured. It is the word whose presence is promised in the tabernacle; whose protection was promised to *Moses*, when he desired to see God. It is the word whose commandments the *Israelites* were carefully to observe. It is the word that dwelt in the pillar of a cloud, and led *Israel* through the wilderness, and that spake out of the fire at *Horeb*. It is the word that created the world, that made man after his image, that spoke to *Adam* in the garden; that lifted up *Enoch* to heaven; and that talked with *Moses* in the tabernacle. It is the word to whom *Moses* prays, and who gives statutes to *Israel*. The word sent fiery serpents, and punished *Israel* for their various crimes. The word said, he had sworn to give *Israel* the land of *Canaan*; and where the scripture says to *Abraham*, "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord;" there both *Onkelos* and *Jonathan* interpret it, "By my word have I sworn, saith the Lord." See doctor *Allix's* "judgment of the ancient *jewish* church," chapter 12, 13. See doctor *Lightfoot's* "harmony of the evangelists, on *John* i. 1." and "horae hebraicae in locum."

That God himself is often signified by the "memra," or word, appears further by the use of the same term, with regard to men also; as *Jonathan Ben Uzziel*, on *Numb.* xv. 32. "A certain man said with his word, I will go forth, and gather sticks on the sabbath day;" where he said with his word, signifies he resolved in his mind, or with himself. *Job* vii. 8. "Thy eyes are upon my memra;" that is, upon me. So "my breath is in my memra," *Job* xxvii. 3. that is, my breath is in me. "There is a league between my memra and thee," 2 *Chron.* xvi. 3. that is, between me and thee. See *Fleming's* "christology," volume I. page 137. and *Lightfoot's* "horae hebraicae, et talmudicae, in *John* i. 1." where they bring other undeniable instances, to prove the memra sometimes is nothing else but a *chaldeism*, denoting one's self: So the word of God sometimes denotes God himself.

II. The "memra," or word of God, in these *jewish* writings is used to signify any thing in or of God, whereby he transacts his divine affairs: It implies some one or more of his attributes, or his powers, his knowledge, his wisdom, his purpose, his command, his efficacy, his providence, or his influence; and where the *hebrew* text metaphorically ascribes human affections, and human members to God, the *targums* use the word "memra," and thus it signifies his head, his face, his mind, his tongue, his mouth, his eye, his hand, or his feet: In general it means that divine power and wisdom, or, in one word, that sufficiency of God which he exerts in managing human affairs, or in revealing himself to the children of men. One *targum* saith, "God created the world by his word;" where the other *targum* says, "by his wisdom," *Gen.* i. 1. So the Lord gave *Noah* warning by his word; the Lord judged the old world by his word, and said, "I will destroy them by my word." And a great variety of such expressions may be found in doctor *Allix's* "judgment of the ancient *jewish* church;" and *Mr. Fleming's* "christology," in the places before cited.

Here let it be noted, that it is the custom of the *jewish* writers, even the penmen of the bible, as well as other authors, to represent powers, attributes, virtues, agencies, &c. in a personal manner, and to describe them as distinct persons. Upon this account, in some places where the "memra" may be supposed to signify the divine sufficiency, or some particular distinction of power or property in the godhead, it is represented in a personal manner by these *jewish* commentators. Whether they had a distinct idea of the Logos, or word, as a second personal agent in the

the divine nature, according to the complete ideas of the *athanasian* explication, is a matter too doubtful to be asserted with any great assurance.

III. The term "*memra*" is used by these *targumists*, for that angel who appeared to the patriarchs and to *Moses*, and assumed the name of God and *Jehovah*. It is the word of the Lord that appeared often, as an angel, to *Abraham*, in the valley of vision; and *Abraham* worshipped, and prayed to the word of the Lord in these appearances. When the angel of the Lord appeared to *Hagar*, the *targums* say, "she confessed before the Lord *Jehovah*, whose word had spoken unto her; and she prayed to the word of the Lord, who had appeared to her." When *Jacob* returned from *Padan-aram*, the word of the Lord, which in scripture is called a man, appeared to him the second time, and blessed him. When the angel of the Lord in scripture is said to appear unto *Moses* in the burning bush, it is said in the *targums*, "the word of the Lord spake to *Moses* there." It was the word of the Lord that appeared against the *egyptians* at midnight, and his right-hand killed the first-born of *Egypt*; which *Moses* ascribes to an angel. And in several other places, where the scripture speaks of an angel, as appearing, and assuming any divine character, these commentators introduce the "*memra*."

Now let it be noted, that it was a current opinion among the *jews*, that there was one great arch-angel, superior to all the rest of the angels in power and dignity; and whom God created or generated before all the others; in whom he put his own name, and whom he employed in most of his important affairs which related to the patriarchs, and to his own people the *jews*. This was the angel whom the *jews* say, God promised to send before his people, *Exod.* xxiii. 20, 21. "To keep them in the way, and to bring them to the promised land: Beware of him, says God, and obey his voice, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your iniquities, for my name is in him." They say, this was the angel who wrestled with *Jacob*, and is called a man, *Gen.* xxxii. 24. Some of the ancient rabbies acknowledge him to be the *Messiah*, and call him the angel *Michael*. It is the same angel, who going before the camp of *Israel* in the wilderness, in the pillar of cloud, *Exod.* xiv. 19. removed and went behind them in the red sea, who by the rabbies is called *Michael* the great prince; he was made a wall of fire between the *israelites* and the *egyptians*. This is *Michael* the great arch angel, the prince of *Israel*, *Dan.* x. 13, 21. *Rev.* xii. 7. See "*Answer on the Pentateuch*." This *Michael* is that high priest of heaven, who offers up the prayers of the righteous, so rabbi *Menahem*: He is the priest above, that offereth, or presenteth the souls of the righteous, saith another of their rabbies. See doctor *Owen's* "*exercitations on the Hebrews*," volume I. page 121.

There was an angel who was called *Metatron*, which doctor *Owen* supposes to be a corrupt expression of the *latin* mediator, who by the rabbies is called the prince of the world, the prince of God's presence, the master or teacher of *Moses* himself; he is the angel always appearing in the presence of God, of whom it is said, "my name is in him." *Bechai*, a great master among them, affirms, when he treats on *Exod.* xxiii. that this name *Metatron* signifies both a lord, a messenger, and a keeper. A lord, because he ruleth all; a messenger, because he stands always before God, to do his will; and a keeper, because he keepeth *Israel*. Some of the *jews* have called him the chancellor of heaven, because he blotteth out the sins of *Israel*. See doctor *Owen* "*on the Hebrews*," volume I. *exercitations*, page 123. and exposition, page 75."

And as the *jews* suppose this angel to have the name of God in him, and to be one in whom God dwelt, and by whom God transacted his affairs, so it seems to be



the same being whom the antient jews before Christ, call the *Shekinah*, that is, the habitation of God; and they sometimes denote this *Shekinah* by the names "memra" and "logos." They attribute the same things to this *Shekinah*, which they attribute to the word of God. They call the *Shekinah* the *Adam* of above, after whose image *Adam* was created. They say, that God having committed to angels the care of other nations, the *Shekinah* alone was intrusted with the care and conduct of *Israel*. They acknowledge the *Shekinah* to be that very angel whom *Jacob* calls his redeemer, and whom the prophets call the angel of the presence, and the angel of the covenant. This was that *Shekinah* who took possession of the tabernacle and the temple in the form of light and glory, and resided in the holy of holies. See more in doctor *Allix's* "judgment of the jewish church," chapter 11.

I confess, the jews sometimes represent this *Shekinah* to signify the holy Spirit: But it is no wonder that the imperfect notices which they had of the sacred doctrine of the trinity might be paraphrased, explained, and commented upon; with some confusion both of names and things: Though what they have left upon record gives us sufficient hints of a certain glorious, angelic being, who had also godhead dwelling in him.

The LXX jewish translators of the bible seem to have had some notion of this glorious arch-angel, and suppose him to be the *Messiah*, whom they call the "child born, the son given," *Isa.* ix. 6. *μεγάλος βουλῆς ἀγγελος*, the angel of the great counsel, while they ascribe to God, or *Jehovah*, who is "great in counsel," *Jer.* xxxii. 19. the title of *κύριος μεγάλος βουλῆς*, Lord of the great counsel.

It is to this arch-angel that *Maimonides* refers, when he says, "the angel, the prince of the world of whom the wise masters so often speak." "More Nevochim, part II. chapter 6. Nye against *Allix*, page 76."

He that would read more of these testimonies, and citations, out of the *Targums*, let him consult the 12th, 13th, and following chapters of doctor *Allix's* "judgment of the antient jewish church," and *Fleming's* "Christology," and doctor *Owen's* "excitations on the *Hebrews*," particularly the 9th and 10th.

IV. The "memra," or word, is sometimes described by them as the Son of God; so the *targum* of *Jerusalem*, *Gen.* iii. 22. "The word of *Jehovah* said, here *Adam* whom I created is the only begotten son in the world, as I am the only begotten Son in the high heaven. *Allix*, page 268. Doctor *Allix* also shews, that they called the *Messiah* the Son of God; as on *Psal.* lxxx. 15. where the psalmist says, the "branch which thou madest strong for thyself," the *targum* reads the words, "for thy Son's sake," and interprets them, "even for the sake of king *Messias*." This seems to be intimated in other places of the *targums*, and in other antient jewish writings: And it is sufficiently manifest, that the jews, in the days of our Saviour, supposed the *Messiah* to be the Son of God, *Matth.* xxvi. 63, 64. *Luke* xxii. 70. though it does not so evidently appear by any of these jewish writings, as doctor *Allix* imagines, that they believed the *Messiah* to be a Son in the godhead itself. This leads me on to the next particular.

V. "Memra" is sometimes used by these jewish authors to signify the *Messiah*. Doctor *Allix* hath spent a good part of his 16th chapter in the proof of this subject, and there is some weight in it: Though it must be acknowledged his proofs in this point are not so evident and express as one would expect, nor sufficient alone to convince an impartial and close inquirer. The learned Mr. *Fleming* therefore acknowledging the insufficiency of doctor *Allix's* allegations, run through the *targums* himself, in those places where he thought it most probable to find any thing of this nature,

ture. See "Christology," Volume I. page 139. and at last he fell upon some passages that seemed very plainly to relate to the *Messiah*. One is this, *Gen. xlix. 18.* "My soul waits for thy salvation, O God." Which the *Jerusalem targum* paraphrases thus, "My soul expects not the redemption of *Gideon*, which is a temporal salvation, nor the redemption of *Samson*, which is a transient salvation, but the redemption which thou didst promise should come through thy "memra" to thy people." Which being compared with the context in the *targum*, shews, that he means the redemption that should come through the *Messiah*. And, indeed, this is the chief proof that the *targums* any where by the "memra" can mean the *Messiah*, viz. that what they attribute to the "memra" in one place, they attribute to the *Messiah* in another, for both these names are frequent in their writings. The defence of this application of the names, see in *Fleming's* "Christology," volume I. page 141, 142.

Yet this learned author would have it noted also, that there are some few passages in the *targums*, wherein it is as plain, that the *Messiah* is distinguished from the "memra" of God, as where it is said, "*Moses* shall go forth from the desert, and the king *Messiah* from *Rome*, and the "memra" of God shall be leader between them both, &c." But then he gives this reason for it, that "memra" denotes *Christ* with relation to his divine subsistence, and before his assumption of human nature, and the *Messiah* denotes him only as he was to appear visibly and become man, and therefore these authors generally distinguish the one from the other, page 143. And it is no wonder, since they had not a clear and distinct knowledge of the complete person of the *Messiah*, nor is it evident, that they believed that he should be the true and eternal God.

Objection. But is it not a vain attempt, to pretend to prove the doctrine of the trinity from the *jewish* rabbies, when it is evident in itself, and generally granted by learned men, that the ancient *jews* had no distinct notion of this doctrine, nor did they generally believe the deity of their *Messiah*, according to your own confession.

Answer. I am not proving the sacred doctrine of the trinity from any of their writings. My present chief business is only to shew, that by various intimations and notices which they derived from the old testament, they are frequently led to speak of the word of God, or "memra," as a power of the divine nature; that they also make "memra" to signify a glorious arch-angel; and though the *jews* themselves do not expressly join these two, to make one complex person, yet they attribute so many of the same things to both, that gives a great deal of countenance to the doctrine of the new testament, which seems to have joined or united these two "memra's" in the one person of the *Messiah*, that is, our blessed Saviour. But of this more hereafter.

I grant all the later *jews* have an aversion to the doctrine of the trinity, and the deity of *Christ*, and deny *Jesus* of *Nazareth* to be the *Messiah*: And therefore they apply a multitude of scriptures to *David*, *Solomon*, *Hezekiah*, *Isaiab*, &c. which their ancient rabbies applied to the *Messiah*, for fear lest they should agree to *Jesus*. But doctor *Owen*, in his learned "exercitations on the epistle to the *Hebrews*," especially 8, 9, 10, 11. shews, that the *targums* abound in applying the scripture prophecies to the *Messiah*.

Before I make any more inferences, let us consult the writings of *Philo* the *jew*; he lived in *Alexandria* in *Egypt*, and was one of the ambassadors of the *jews* to the emperor of *Rome*, a little after the death of our Saviour. He was a great writer, and a very learned man: His language is *Greek*, and he is supposed to write in our



Saviour's life-time. In many of his books he speaks of the "logos," or the word of God, and uses it in most of those senses in which the *targums* use it.

Now, though I have neither health nor leisure enough to throw away much of them in perusing such ancient *jewish* folio's, and allegorical writers\*, yet I have turned over three or four hundred pages of this author, and read all I could meet with there concerning the "logos," and have also searched out many other of the citations of doctor *Allix*, in his "judgment of the antient *jewish* church," and Mr. *Nye*, in his "four letters against doctor *Allix*," and must declare upon the whole, that their citations for the most part are just, though in some places Mr. *Nye* keeps nearer to the words and sense of the original author.

The senses in which *Philo* may be supposed to use the word "logos" are these.

I. Perhaps he may mean God himself by the Logos, when in his "treatise of the cherubim" he says, "God has two supreme powers, viz. goodness and strength, or dominion, and between these is the Logos which unites, or reconciles, them both." Compare this with his "discourse on the sacrifices of *Cain* and *Abel*," where he says, "God accompanied with his two supreme powers, viz. dominion and goodness, he himself being in the midst of them." What he calls the Logos in one place, he calls God himself in the other. But whether he may not intend the divine mind, reason or wisdom, I will not determine.

I confess he does not so manifestly use the name "logos" to signify God himself, as the *targums* do; though in many places, when God, or *Jehovah*, is said to visit the patriarchs, and transact affairs with them, *Philo* ascribes it to the "logos," or word of God. But it must be acknowledged that he does with much more frequency and plainness use the term "logos" in the following senses.

II. *Philo* uses the word "logos" often for a particular divine power or property, which he frequently represents in a personal manner, and ascribes to it the characters that belong to a person, as the *jews* are wont to do, in a figurative way. As he speaks of those two divine powers, *δυναμεις*, viz. goodness and dominion, so he sometimes speaks of the "logos," that is, the word, or wisdom, or reason, as of another power, the director and governor of both these. He calls all these powers "uncreated, eternal, infinite, immense and incomprehensible: By one of these powers all things were created; by another all things are governed." But he makes the "logos" to be employed both in creation and government, though eminently in creation.

In his treatise "de mundi opificio" he says, "the vast intelligible world, or the idea according to which God framed the visible world, can have no place but in the *θεῶν λόγος*, or divine word, for the other powers of God do not afford it a proper place." And a little after he saith, "this intelligible idea, in plain words, is nothing else than the *λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ*, the word of God, or the reason of God creating the world." He speaks of God's creation of the world by the "logos," as an instrument, *ὄργανον*, in several places. And in his "plantation of *Noah*," he tells us, that "man's rational soul is the image of the invisible God, whose character, or express image is eternal reason, or his everlasting word, *ἡ χαρακτὴρ ἐστὶν ὁ αἰδίδυμος λόγος*, though whether these two last citations refer rather to the angelic "logos," may admit some doubt.

He

\* Though *Philo* abound in unreasonable allegories, and turn the literal history of the bible into an allegorical sense, yet this very allegorical sense is a sufficient indication what his opinions were, even though his application of them to particular scriptures be never so ridiculous: And consequently this is sufficient to answer all the purposes for which I cite him.

He supposes this "logos" of God to be the same as *sophia*, or wisdom, which in his allegorical way he makes the "the daughter of God, and the mother of all things, by which the world was brought forth. This is that wisdom which was with God before the world." See doctor *Allix*, page 147. and Mr. *Nye* against doctor *Allix*, page 71, 77.

Now that by this "logos," the divine reason, or wisdom, *Philo* does not mean a real distinct person, in the literal sense of the word person, is evident; because he says, "before the world was made God was *μῦς*, alone; *ἓν*, one being; and *ὃν οὐκ ἔστι πολλὰν συνίστα*, not consisting of more:" And he often speaks of the person of God, as one; though he represents several powers in him. See *Nye*, page 69.

We may observe, that *Philo* speaks of wisdom in the feminine, and once he gives this reason for it, viz. to "preserve to God the character of a Father." So doctor *Allix*, page 271. But Mr. *Nye* does not remember that this divine essential wisdom is ever called the Son of God; and he cites "*Origen contra Celsum*, book ii. page 79. saying, "I have often disputed with the *jewish* rabbies: They would none of them acknowledge that the *Λόγος*, that is, the divine reason, word or wisdom, is the Son of God," page 51. Whence we may infer, that this name Son, seems rather to be appropriated to the Logos, considered as the great arch-angel; even as all the angels are in scripture called the sons of God. Doctor *Allix*, indeed, says, page 122. "that *Philo* asserts the word of God to be the eternal Son of God," and quotes his book "*de confusione linguarum*." Now I have turned over that book, and have not found this express appellation: But what expressions of that kind I have met with there, and in other of his treatises shall be cited under the following heads.

III. The term "logos" is used frequently by *Philo* for a glorious angel, vastly superior to all other angels, whom he calls the most honourable "logos," the arch-angel, prince of angels and stars; and as the *jews*, and scriptures, call all angels sons of God; so this "logos," this arch-angel, according to *Philo*, is the first-born of all his sons.

In his treatise of "the confusion of tongues," he persuades men to endeavour to be adorned like the first-born word of God, the most ancient angel, the arch-angel who has many names, who is called the beginning, *ἀρχή*, the name of God; the Word of God; the man after God's image; and the seer of *Israel*." And he adds, "Wherefore I commended those who had said, that we are all sons of one man, *ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου*; for though we are not worthy to be called the children of God, yet we are the children of his most holy word, his *εἰκόνα*, everlasting image; for the most ancient word is the image of God." In another place, a little before this, where he is persuading mankind to peace, he says, "How comes it to pass that ye do not hate war, since ye profess to have the same Father, not mortal but immortal, even *ἀνθρώπου θεῷ ὃς τε αἰδίου λόγος*, a man of God, who being the word of the eternal, must himself also be incorruptible."

Again, "from a companion of *Moses*, that is, *Zachary* a fellow-prophet, we have heard this saying, behold a man whose name is \* THE EAST, *Ἀνατολή*. This is a new sort of appellation, if we understand it of a man who consists of a body and a soul; but if it be understood of that incorporeal man †, who differs not from the divine image, you will

\* The branch, *Zech. vi. 12.* is rendered *ἀνατολή* by the LXX. which signifies also the east.

† Now that *Philo* seems to mean a man here, or a human soul, may be proved; because he speaks of him in direct opposition to a worse sort of man, whom he also calls *ἀνατολή*, or the east, because he lived in the east: This was *Balak*, who, saith *Philo*, hath a name like the former, but it is very different in reality.



will confess that it is a most happy name for him: For the Father of beings caused this his most ancient Son to arise, *ἀνίστασθαι*, whom otherwise he calls his first-born; who being born did immediately imitate his Father's ways: for seeing his archetypal exemplars, he did form copies exactly like them. This *Philo* speaks when he cites *Zechariah* vi. 12. "behold the man whose name is *Ἀνατολή*, the east, or the branch:" "De confusione linguarum." And these words bear a very near affinity to the words of our Saviour himself, *John* v. 19. "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doth, these also doth the Son likewise."

In his book "de migratione *Abrahami*," he says, that "God, who is the mind of the universe, *ὁ νοῦς τῶν ὅλων*, has his "logos" for his house.—What house can he have but his word, who is elder than things created, which the pilot of the universe useth as a rudder, to steer or direct all things." This seems to refer to an angel who is his only begotten Son, prior to all mere creatures, and not ranked among mere created beings, one in whom God inhabits, and by whom he transacts his affairs of government.

Again, saith *Philo*, "de agricultura," "God governs this universe as a shepherd doth his flock; over-ruling and managing the earth, water, air, fire, the heavens, sun, moon, things mortal and spiritual, having set over them his own righteous "logos," who is his first-born Son; who takes upon himself the care of this sacred flock, as vice-gerent of this great king: Therefore it is said, *Exod.* xxiii. 20. "Behold I send my angel before thee, to keep thee in the way."

Again in another place, "nothing mortal can be formed; that is, immediately, after the image of the supreme God, and Father of all things; but only after the image of the second god, who is the "logos" of God: For the reasonable part of the soul of man is the express image of the "logos" of God." Though whether *Philo* meant the divine essential power, called "logos," or the great arch-angel in this place, perhaps, may be questioned; but it is most agreeable to the last. See more in Mr. *Fleming's* "Christology," volume I. page 248, &c. and Mr. *Nye's* answer to doctor *Allix*, page 75.

*Philo* asserts the great dignity of the angel that appeared to the patriarchs, and calls him eminently the Word. It was the "Word appeared to *Adam*; he appeared also to *Jacob* and *Moses*, though in the books of *Moses* he is called an angel. It was the Word that appeared to *Abraham*, as an angel, and that called to him not to hurt his son, when he was about to sacrifice him. It was the Word appeared to *Hagar*, and to *Jacob*, and delivered him out of all his troubles. It was the Word directed him how to manage *Laban's* flock, and advised him to return to the land of his kindred, that appeared to him in the form of an angel, and wrestled with him, and changed his name to *Israel*. It was the Word who led *Israel* through the wilderness. He was the angel in whom God placed his name; the prince of the angels who was in the cloud, and is called the divine vision of fire. He appeared to *Moses*, and the elders of *Israel* on mount *Sinai*. He appeared to *Balaam* like an angel; and it was the Word, who is the Son of God, that conducted *Israel* through the wilderness." See doctor *Allix's* judgment of the Jewish church, chapter 12, 13.

"This word is not unbegotten, *ἀγέννητος*, like God, and yet not begotten, or made *γεννητός*, like his creatures. He is a divine angel, *θεὸς ἀγγελος*, and a minister of the gifts of God." "Quod deus sit immutabilis." And it is evident, that *Philo* makes a great difference between the true God, and this "logos," or Word: He abounds with instances of this kind, especially in his first book "de somniis." And when he makes God to appear to the patriarchs in form of an angel, he adds, "they understand the image

image of God, the angel, his word, as though it were himself, because a little after he calls him, the mighty word, who is the deputy of God.

It may be also most properly applicable to this glorious arch-angel, what *Philo* saith of the word, in his "allegories of the law," book I. where he cites *Jacob* saying, "The God who hath fed me all my life, and the angel who redeemed me from all evil:" On which he remarks, that "*Jacob* speaks very properly of God himself as his feeder; and the angel, which is his word, as a healer of diseases, or deliverer from evils; and he gives this reason for it, feeding and nourishing are something in nature more considerable than deliverance, and therefore he ascribes the chief benefit to God, and the lower benefit to the angel. I mention not this, as approving the justness of *Philo's* criticism, but to shew what was *Philo's* opinion of this glorious angel, eminently called the "logos."

It must be granted, that *Philo* calls common angels also λόγος, "logoi," or words; but it is abundantly manifest to any man who reads *Philo*, and Mr. Nye himself acknowledges, there is a great distinction that *Philo* makes between that first arch-angel, who is so far superior to all the rest, as to be formed before them all, and to be their ruler or director; and to be eminently called the "logos" above all others.

IV. That the "logos" is esteemed by *Philo* the Son of God, is manifest from the citations already made: But we may add further out of doctor *Allix*, chapter 17. that when the question is put, *Prov.* xxx. 4. "What is his name? And what is his Son's name?" It implies, that God has a Son. And *Psal.* ii. 7. where God declares, "Thou art my Son," it determines this character to belong to the *Messiah*. And *Philo* accordingly declares that the "logos" is the most ancient Son of God, and his first-born before the angels. And in a citation which *Eusebius* has out of *Philo*, he makes him "the eternal word of the eternal God, begotten by the Father:" Though it may, perhaps, be doubted, whether *Eusebius* has cited the very words of *Philo*. And if *Philo* did use the words ἀίδεος and αἰώνιος, and apply them to the son-ship of the "logos," it may be justly questioned whether either *Philo* or *Eusebius*, considering their character and sentiments, meant any more than ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων, that is, "Before the worlds were made, or before all ages;" unless we suppose both the jew and the christian to blend and confound the ideas of the divine eternal "logos," or reason of God, with the first born "logos," or great arch angel, which was too often done.

V. This "logos," *Philo* supposes to be a mediator between God and men; and though he does not distinctly call him the *Messiah*, yet he calls him a man, and attributes the office of mediator between God and man to him. He calls him in his first book "de sommiis ὁ θεὸς λόγος, τῆς ἀριστίας κεφαλὴ καὶ τέλος," "the divine word, the beginning and end of the atonement." He supposes it was the "logos" which appeared to the jews on mount *Sinai*, and gave them the law, as a sort of mediator between God and them. He affirms, that the "logos" was the true and eternal priest, "libro de profugis." "That he divided the sacrifice when he appeared to *Abraham*, and that he was the priest of God. That the word is a mediator between God and man; that he makes atonement with God." And many other things which plainly belong to the *Messiah*, our great high priest, in scripture, does *Philo* apply to the "logos." See doctor *Allix*, chapter 20.

But for this purpose I need cite no other passage than what I met with lately in *Philo's* treatise, "Quis rerum divinarum habes." He saith, "The Father of all things has bestowed this most admirable gift upon this arch angel, that he should stand as a mediator, μεθέρων, that is, one on the borders of both, to distinguish between the creature and the Creator. He therefore is an intercessor, ἐκζητῶν, with him that is immortal



immortal, in behalf of perishing mortals. And, on the other hand, he acts the part of an ambassador, from the ruler to his subjects. And this gift he doth so willingly accept, that he glories in it, saying, "And I have stood between God and you," See *Deut.* xviii. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. being one who am neither unbegotten as God, nor made as mortals; but being something middle between these, *ὁμολογῶν*, acting the part of a hostage with both: With the Creator as a pledge, in faith of this, that he may not ever be provoked to destroy or desert the world, so as to suffer it to run from order into confusion: And with creatures, to give them this certain hope, that God being reconciled, will never cease to take care of his own workmanship. For I proclaim peace to the creature, from that God who removes war, and introduceth and preserveth peace for ever." I find Mr. *Fleming* has transcribed this passage at large, in his "Christology;" and Mr. *Nye* has cited the most remarkable part of this passage also in his "four letters."

From all these citations out of the *targums* and *Philo's* works, it seems plain, that the term "logos" is sometimes attributed to that which is increated, infinite, supreme of all, of the essence of God, and incommunicably divine: It is at other times used to signify an inferior nature, an angel, something that is derived, begotten, dependent, and much below the dignity of godhead. It must be acknowledged, that these ancient *jews* mingle some confusion with their writings; and do not keep their supreme and inferior ideas so distinct as one would wish. And this is not strange, because they wanted that clear revelation of the union of God and a creature, in one *Jesus Christ*, one complex principle of action, which we christians enjoy by the gospel.

And yet even the most part of christian writers seem to have unhappily fallen into the same confusions, when they treat of these transactions of the word, before the incarnation: And though they have framed different schemes for the reconciliation of these difficulties, it has been hitherto without any great success. And the reason, perhaps, is this, because each of them generally attribute all that is said of the "memra," or "logos," merely to his divine and supreme nature, or they apply it all merely to his created, or inferior nature; or else they drop one of these natures entirely; and thus miss the mark, for want of supposing such an union between a divine and created nature, before the incarnation of *Christ*: Whereas this union discovers a proper complex subject for these different attributions.

The christian writers who cite those passages out of the *targums* and *Philo* the *jew*, interpret them according to their own scheme of divinity, and their particular sentiments of the person of *Christ*; as appears if we consider their writings.

*Sandius* is generally known to be a follower, or imitator, of the *arian* scheme, and he applies as many of these glorious expressions as he can, to the great arch-angel, that first-born spirit, which the *arians* suppose to be the divinest nature of *Christ*, and while he makes this to serve for a human spirit to the *Messiah*, he doth not allow any superior, or divine nature, to belong to him. He sums up his collections out of *Philo*, which he had elsewhere made, in these words, "The 'logos' is a second god, next to the first; and governs the world by command of the first God: That God himself and his Word are two things: That the supreme God is unbegotten and invisible, and the God of the Logos; but the Logos is begotten and visible, the minister of God, and the intercessor with God for men, the ambassador of God to men, and a middle being, or medium, betwixt God and creatures." *Sandii* "nucleus historiarum ecclesiasticarum, page 108." See many other citations of his out of *Philo*, in his "interpretationes paradoxarum, &c."

Mr.

Mr. Nye, on the other hand, who hath been accused as approaching the *sabellian* principles, seems, in his "letters against doctor *Allix*," to drop this glorious spirit, or arch-angel, which is called the "logos", as a mere *jewish* notion; and does not make it enter into the composition of the person of *Christ*; but supposes the sublimer characters of the "logos," to belong to the essential wisdom of God, or the Word, which was personally united to the man *Jesus* at his incarnation. See his "first letter against doctor *Allix*."

Doctor *Allix*, in his "judgment of the *jewish* church," approaches nearer to the *tritheistical* hypothesis, and is charged with it by Mr. Nye, because he speaks of three creators, makers and gods, a trinity of uncreated beings and spirits, see "*Nye* against *Allix*, page 5, 7, 8, 13, 14, 177, &c." Now on this hypothesis doctor *Allix* distinguishing the divine wisdom, or Word, from God the Father, as a real, proper, distinct person, sometimes he applies what these *jewish* authors say of the arch-angel, called the "logos", to the eternal divine Word, or wisdom, that is, to the second person in the deity; though this seems not to be agreeable to their sense, for these ancient *jews* describe this angel as a superior sort of created, or derivative being, an effect, or production, of the will and power of God, as the christian fathers speak, and though not coming perfectly into the rank of other creatures, yet not as being the true God, or properly divine. Mr. Nye justly reprehends doctor *Allix* for this, that he hath heaped together indifferently all that *Philo* says of several "logoi," and applied all to the eternal essential "logos," not being aware that this eternal essential "logos" is very different from the great created "logos," or arch-angel, who presides over the angels and stars. "Letter II. page 80."

In short, all the moderns interpret these ancient *jewish* writings, as every party of men is ready to interpret the scripture, to support their own hypothesis. But I cannot persuade myself that either *Sandius*, doctor *Allix*, or Mr. Nye, in their sentiments, do sufficiently answer the expressions of these ancient authors: For each of them doth either join and affix divine characters to a dependent or created nature, or they apply inferior and creatural characters to a divine nature, or else they drop one or more of these senses of the word "logos," and leave it out of the character of the *Messiah*. Whereas, if we would but give ourselves leave to suppose the *Messiah*, or the Logos, even in his pre-existent state as well as after his incarnation, to be a complex, or compounded person, and that the divine Logos, the eternal Word assumed a super-angelic, or inferior nature, called also "logos" into union with himself before he took flesh upon him, and even before the world was made, this would reconcile all these ideas which seem inconsistent, and scatter the darkness that hangs over these ancient writers, and even over the scripture itself, if this opinion be not admitted.

The learned Mr. *Robert Fleming*\*, seems to come nearer to the sense of these ancients, and explains them more agreeably to scripture, when he supposes the eternal essential Logos to be a person in the godhead, and to be united to the created "logos" or great arch-angel, which is the pre-existent soul of *Christ*; and thus the sublime and inferior expressions of the ancients concerning this complex being may be happily reconciled and explained.

\* As Scotland has produced some great and illustrious instances of piety and devotion, some men of a heavenly mind, filled with the fire of divine love beyond their fellows, so this learned author, Mr. *Robert Fleming* is an instance of what might be expected from that nation also in respect of light and sacred knowledge, if they did but exert their genius with the same liberty of sentiment that he used, whose constant motto was, "*Liberè sed modeste*."



## SECTION IV.

*The application of the jewish sentiments to the scriptural account of Christ.*

**G**IVE me leave now to enquire, whether scripture doth not lead us to this conception of things? Whether scripture does not set the Logos, or Word of God, in all these lights and views? Or, whether the scripture does not speak of *Christ* according to the five particular ideas whereby the ancient *jews* interpret or explain their "logos," though for conveniency sake I shall not mention them just in the same order?

I. That *Christ*, who is called the Logos in scripture, is the *Messiah*, admits of no doubt or controversy among christians.

II. That *Christ*, or the Logos, is the Son of God, is also asserted so expressly in many texts, as to forbid all dispute about: And he has obtained this name in scripture, upon these accounts\*.

1. On the account of his investiture with the office of the *Messiah*; for hereby he was appointed to be the great high priest, and king of his people: And this title was more eminently his due at his resurrection, ascension, and exaltation in heaven, to be a priest upon a throne, where his kingdom and power to save were more illustriously displayed, according to these texts, *Psal.* ii. 6, 7. "I have set my king upon my holy hill of *Zion*. I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, that is, by intercession in heaven, and I will give thee the heathen for thy inheritance, &c. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish." *Psal.* lxxxix. 27. "I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth." *Heb.* v. 5. "*Christ* glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that said to him, thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee." *Acts* xiii. 30. "God hath fulfilled his promise in raising *Jesus* from the dead, as it is written in the second *Psal*m, thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee."

2. He is called the Son of God on the account of the extraordinary birth of his body, which proceeded from the virgin *Mary* without a human father, by the immediate influence of God. *Luke* i. 35. the angel saith to *Mary*, "The power of the highest shall overshadow thee, therefore that holy thing which is born of thee shall be called the Son of God." This is most express language.

But it is evident by the foregoing citations, that the Logos is not usually called Son of God by these ancient *jews*, upon either of these two accounts, but rather on that which follows, which is the third idea of the term "logos."

III. The Logos is the first-born Son of God, as he is a glorious, angelic, or supra-angelic spirit, who was often called an angel under the old testament, when he appeared to the patriarchs. May not this be the human soul of our blessed Saviour? May not this illustrious spirit, this great arch-angel, which is called eminently the Logos, be the prince of angels, who was born before them all, and is the first-born of the creation? May not this be the only begotten Son of God in the high heaven, as *Adam* was here on earth, as having, perhaps, some peculiar mode, or unknown

\* Some may wonder, that I have omitted the eternal generation of his divine nature in this place. But I know no text that plainly calls *Christ* the Son, considered as pure God; and if revelation does not dictate the doctrine of a begotten God, reason does not at all require it. But I have given a larger account of this matter in another place.

unknown manner of derivation from the Father, different from the rest of the creatures? For even these ancient *jews*, though they acknowledge him to be, in the general sense, a derived being, and not God, yet they, call him rather the first-born of God, as though creation were too low a term to express his original, and would set him too much on a level with other creatures which were so far inferior to him. And, why may we not suppose the human soul of *Christ* to be derived from God in some unknown, transcendent manner, distinct from other creatures, even as his human body was, and thus to become the peculiar Son of God, both as to his body and soul?

One great reason that hath induced me to believe that the scriptures suppose the soul of *Christ* to be this pre-existent being, this glorious arch-angel, is, because there are so many expressions of scripture both in the old testament and the new which represent *Christ*, before his incarnation, under some characters which are inferior to godhead, some of which I have hinted briefly in the beginning of this discourse.

Now, upon this supposition, that the soul of *Christ* is this most honourable "logos," or chief angel, how properly is he called in the old testament the "angel of God's face, or presence," *Isa.* lxiii. 9. "The angel of the covenant," *Mal.* iii. 1. "The angel, the redeemer of *Jacob*," *Gen.* xlviii. 16. "The angel in whom the name of God was," *Exod.* xxiii. 20. And, "the angel who could say, I am that I am, I am the God of *Abraham*," *Exod.* iii. 2, 14, 15, &c. upon the account of his intimate and personal union to the divine nature?

It might be here enquired also, Whether the angel mentioned in *Eccles.* v. 6. be not the same glorious arch-angel, that is, *Christ*. The words are these; "Say not before the face of the angel, it was an error: Wherefore should God be angry at thy voice?" *Solomon* is here advising us against rash vows. And he supposes some eminent angel, "in whom is the name of God," as *Exod.* xxiii. 20. or who is called God, being present to hear the vow, especially in the house of God, as verse 1. It is certain the *jews* had a common notion of some extraordinary angel in whom God dwelt, and the scripture often intimates it.

IV. The "logos," or word, sometimes signifies the wisdom of the Father, or some special power, or divine sufficiency of the godhead, whereby all things were contrived and created, and which is represented sometimes in a personal manner by these *jewish* writers. *Psal.* xxxiii. 6. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens created." *2 Pet.* iii. 5, 7. "By the word of God were the heavens of old, that is, were created, and by the same word they are preserved, and reserved for the fire." And whether *πῶμα*, used on the same occasion, by which "the world was made, and is upheld, *Heb.* i. 3. and *xi.* 3. may not be the same with this divine *λογος*, is matter of enquiry, and in my maturest thoughts, it is not improbable.

In this sense *Christ* is also the Logos or Word of God, for God created all things by that Logos, who "was with God, who was God, who was made flesh, and dwelt among us," *John* i. 1, 14. "He created the worlds by this his Son," *Heb.* i. 2. "He created all things, by *Jesus Christ*," *Eph.* iii. 9. He is that divine wisdom which was with God before the foundations of the world were laid, as *Solomon* describes in *Prov.* viii. 22—31.

And if we can suppose this wisdom, or Word, assuming into union with itself the soul of the *Messiah*, or that great arch-angel, when he was first created, or generated, and using his ministration in it's ancient divine operations and transactions, then all those superior and inferior expressions which are used in *John* i. 1—14. and in *Col.* i. 15—19. and in *Heb.* i. 2—11. and in *Prov.* viii. 22—31. and in *John* v. 19, 20,



26, 27, &c. may be applied to *Christ* as a complex person. Then it may be said concerning this person, "he was brought forth before the hills, the Lord possessed him in the beginning of his way before his works of old, he was set up from everlasting, that is, from the beginning, or ever the earth was," &c.

On this text, in *Prov.* viii. 22. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way," it may be farther observed, that the septuagint renders the *hebrew* word *יְיָ בָרָא* *barā me*, that is, created me, which the primitive christian writers often cite, but are at a great loss how to explain it. Sometimes they apply it to the Father's constituting *Christ* Lord of the creation; which does not seem to be the true meaning of it in this place. Sometimes they refer it to the production, or generation of the Logos, by the will and power of the Father, which is a superior sort of creation, and may be most properly applied to this angelic Logos, or human soul of *Christ*, which was created or produced by the will of the Father, and assumed into union with, or possessed by the divine Logos before all worlds, of which we shall say more hereafter.

These are only remarks by the way: But it is manifest, that the word of God, or "logos," in scripture, sometimes signifies an essential, co-eternal, divine power. And in that famous text, *1 John* v. 7. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one;" whether the Logos, or Word, signify this divine power, which is called the second person in the deity, or whether it signify *Christ* in his whole complete person as God-man, is hard to determine.

V. In *Heb.* iv. 12. The Word, the Logos, denotes God acting by his word; Logos implies God himself, for a divine power, is deity. And *Christ* is the Logos in this sense also: For the evangelist *John* says, "The Word was God;" *John* i. 1. and *St. Paul* calls *Christ* "God manifest in the flesh:" *1 Tim.* iii. 16. He is the Lord, and the God of *Thomas* the apostle; *John* xx. 28. he is "God over all blessed for ever." *Rom.* ix. 5. The divine, essential power, called the Logos, is the true God, for every thing essential to God, is God.

Nor is it strange at all, that Logos should signify God himself, since it signifies the wisdom, or reason of God, for the same word "logos," in it's primary, or most usual sense, denoting the reason of any spirit, is upon that account used sometimes to denote the Spirit itself. Thus the human mind, and angelic spirits, are called *λόγια* among ancient *greek* writers, particularly *Philo* and *Origen*; but *Christ* is called *ὁ λόγος*, or, the Word, emphatically, and the divine word.

If therefore *Christ* be a divine power, called the "logos," he is God himself.

Thus all these five applications of the terms "logos," or "memra," or word, as used by the ancient *Jews*, are happily reconciled in our blessed Saviour; and a great part of that confusion which seems to be in their expressions is banished by this representation of things: Thus also there seems to be an illustrious light shed upon many dark passages of scripture, and the inferior and superior characters of the *Messiah*, *Christ*, or Logos, are naturally, and easily adjusted, by supposing his sacred person to be composed of a glorious, created spirit, inhabited by the divine, essential, or personal wisdom, or Word. Thus he was the eternal Creator, and also the first-born of all the creatures, and in some sense existed as God-man before his incarnation. And this is what I have endeavoured to evince by the light of scripture, in a distinct treatise of the "glory of *Christ* as God-man," which may shortly see the light\*.

\* This treatise was published in 1746, and is the last in this volume.

In this view of things we have no need to make *Christ* to be the Son of God, properly in his divine nature, or to attribute any character of derivation, generation, or dependence, to his pure godhead, which carries a seeming impropriety in it. His sonship, even under the old testament, as well as under the new, is better accounted for this way; and his angelic character, as the messenger of God in all ages, and the revealer of his will to the patriarchs, as well as to us, is preserved and explained, without sinking pure godhead down to inferior characters, or attributing superior and divine characters, titles and prerogatives, to an angelic or inferior nature.

The learned and pious doctor *Thomas Goodwin*, that deep and happy enquirer into the sense of scripture, gives numerous instances wherein the divine nature of *Christ*, must be supposed by way of *prolepsis* to be united to man in many of the expressions of scripture concerning *Christ*. Those glorious texts, *John* i. 1—3. *Col.* i. 16, 17. *Heb.* i. 2, 3. *Phil.* ii. 6. *Prov.* viii. 22—31. are all interpreted by him in this light, in his second book of the “knowledge of God the Father, and his Son *Jesus Christ*,” vol. II. fol.

“It is *Christ*, says he, considered as God-man, who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature, by whom, and for whom, all things were created in heaven or earth, visible or invisible, who is before all things, and by whom all things consist, who is the Son of God, whom he hath appointed the heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, who is the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, who by himself purged away our sins, who was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, who is the Word by whom all things were made, and who was with God in the beginning, who was set up from everlasting, and brought up before the hills,” &c. And that learned author contends, that these attributions cannot belong to the pure, simple divine nature of *Christ*, without taking in the inferior nature which was designed to be united to him, and therefore, in the language of scripture, it is mentioned in such a manner as though it were actually united.

There is very little difference between my opinion, and the sentiments of that great man in the exposition of all these scriptures, except only, that he attributes to the human nature of *Christ* before it’s existence, and considered only in it’s designed-and future union with the divine nature, those same scriptural properties, characters, and transactions, which I would rather ascribe to the human soul of *Christ*, supposing it actually existent, and considered always in a present, real, and personal union with his divine nature. Now, as he supposes those texts must necessarily be explained concerning *Christ* as God-man, so I suppose a literal interpretation of scripture is to be preferred before a figurative and *proleptical* sense, where it will consist with all other points of reason and revelation; and therefore I am ready to persuade myself, that the supposition of the real existence of the glorious human soul of *Christ*, as a super-angelic being, in actual union with the divine, eternal Logos, before the creation, as it happily corresponds with the ancient *jewish* notions, so it will afford a better solution to many scriptural difficulties, will raise a nobler idea of the person of our blessed Lord, and add a lustre to the whole scheme of the gospel, as depending on his person, characters and transactions.

There is one objection will arise here, viz. how can the human soul of *Christ* be called an angel, since it is said in *Heb.* ii. 16. “He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of *Abraham*.”

Answer I. The words in the original are, ἀγγέλων ἐκ ἐπιλαμβάνειαι, &c. “He does not lay hold on angels, but he lays hold on the seed of *Abraham*,” that is, to bring them



them out of that bondage in which they were held in the foregoing verse, "Then it follows, verse 17. "Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like his brethren," that is, It behoved him, who had a soul before, to take flesh and blood upon him now, since he came to lay hold on men, to rescue them from bondage.

As the *greek* words themselves do not signify taking the nature of angels, or of *Abraham*, so neither will the context allow that translation, as some learned men have supposed, particularly *Camero*. For it would be hardly consistent language to say, "He took not on him the nature of angels, but took on him the nature of the seed of *Abraham*, for which reason it became him to be made like his brethren, that is, to take flesh and blood upon him." This would be proving "*idem per idem*." Whereas the sense is very natural when we read it thus, "He does not lay hold on angels to rescue them, but he lays hold on the seed of *Abraham*, for their rescue from bondage. Wherefore it became him in all things to be made like his brethren," that is, It became him, who before was a spirit, now to be made flesh, since he came to redeem those who are partakers of flesh.

Answer II. But suppose our *english* translation were exactly true, yet the human soul of *Christ* may be called an angel in it's separate state, though it be really a human spirit, or of a species of spirits different from the angelic world; for since the vulgar hypothesis supposes, the divine nature of *Christ* to be called an angel in the old testament, because of it's appearances like an angel, and being employed as a messenger from the Father, much more may we suppose the human soul of *Christ* to be called an angel for the very same reasons; while at the same time it might have some peculiar distinguishing properties of a human spirit, which are unknown to us.

## S E C T I O N V.

*The sentiments of the primitive christians concerning the Logos, and their application of this name to Christ.*

**T**HUS we have seen how the doctrine of scripture may be enlightened by some acquaintance with the writings of the ancient *jews*. Now, if we find also, that the primitive christians have left us several traces and footsteps of the same notions, if they speak the same sort of language, and correspond with these sentiments, it will be an additional confirmation of the doctrine which I have proposed.

I shall confine my self, chiefly, in this enquiry, to the writings of the three first centuries, which all the world esteems to be of the chief importance, as being nearest to the days of the apostles. Yet even of these I shall cite but few at large in their own language, because I intend this discourse as a mere essay, or hint of thought to others, who may be much better qualified to pursue such a reconciling scheme, and not as a laborious proof and demonstration of my opinion.

I. That the primitive fathers, by the Logos, intended the *Messiah* in his pre-existent state, is a truth so abundantly manifest, and agreed on all hands, that it would be superfluous to make citations on this head.

II. That the Logos is also the Son of God, is as evident as the former: The writings of the fathers, through all the centuries, are full of it: But in what sense he is a Son, and when he began to be a Son, whether from all eternity, or sometime before the creation, is a matter of difference, and doubtful enquiry, which we shall examine by and by.

III. That

III. That the "logos" or word, is a divine power, eternal, infinite, &c. analogous to mind, wisdom, or reason, is so apparent in their writings, as leaves little room for doubt; though it is also represented often in a personal manner by the christian fathers, even as in the sacred and common *jewish* writings.

The primitive fathers frequently call our Saviour the Word, or reason, the wisdom, the light, the virtue, and the power, Νῆς, or the mind, and sometimes θείημα, or the will of God. Many of them argue for the eternity of the "logos" upon this principle, that God was always λογικός, never ἀλογος, always rational, and never without his reason, his word or wisdom. *Justin Martyr*, *Athenagoras*, *Theophilus of Antioch*, *Tatian*, and several others, assert the Logos to be co-eternal with the Father, under the character of the divine word or reason, though not under the special character of a Son.

*Theophilus* in his second book to *Autolycus*, calls him the wisdom and power of the highest, and the word which was conceived in the heart of God, and by which he formed the world. This word was διαπαύσις ἐν δόξῃ ἐν καρδίᾳ Θεοῦ, and presently he adds, τῶν ἔχει συμβεβηκέναι αὐτῷ ὡς ὁ φρόνησιν ὄντα, that is, always conceived in the heart of God: This word he had for a counsellor, being his own mind and thought, or prudence.

*Hippolytus*, contra *Noetum* capite x. asserts, that God being alone was many, for he was ἐν λόγῳ, ἐν σοφίᾳ, ἐν δυνάμει, ἐν ἀβύσσῳ, neither irrational, nor unwise, nor impotent; or, neither without reason, or without wisdom, or without power, or without counsel; which words, saith the learned doctor *Waterland*, correspond to the several names of the Son, and the holy Spirit, and mean the same thing.

*Tertullian*, contra *Praxeam* capite v. says, "God was alone, because there was nothing eternal but himself; but even then he was not alone, for he had with him, rationem suam, quam habebat in semetipso, his reason, which was within himself." And again, contra *Hermogenem*, "Habuit deus sapiam suam; hæc illi consiliarius fuit. He had his wisdom with him; and this was his counsellor." He supposes reason to be eternal, and to be before the word. "Non sermonealis à principio, sed rationalis deus etiam ante principium, that is, God had not the word with him, or was not a speaker, from the beginning, but was rational even before the beginning." See contra *Praxeam* capite v. So that *Tertullian* chuses to translate the eternal Logos, reason; supposing him to become the Word, at or a little before the creation.

*Clemen of Alexandria*, in *Stromatum* libro vii. calls *Christ*, or the Logos, πατρική τις ἐνέργεια, a certain virtue, or energy of the Father. And *Justin Martyr*, in his dialogue with *Trypho*, calls him a rational power\*, which is also called the glory of the Father.

Now it is evident concerning the Logos, or *Christ*, as he is the wisdom, mind, or reason, of the Father, that he must be truly and properly divine, necessarily existent, eternal, infinite, &c. as the Father; for he is of the very essence of godhead; an eternal divine power, which belongs to the nature of God; which was always with God from eternity; is for ever unchangeable, and inseparable from God: And in this sense he is consubstantial and coessential with the Father.

Though it seems manifest, that the Logos in this sense is a power of the divine mind, and is not another conscious mind, distinct from the Father; yet it was the custom of the ancient *jewish* writers, as well as of the primitive christians, sometimes to represent this Logos, this eternal reason, wisdom, or word, in a personal manner; and

\* Perhaps, by δυνάμις λογική in this place *Justin Martyr* may mean some supra-angelic spirit; but I cannot certainly learn from the context, what his idea was.



and that not only because the scripture favours this dialect, or manner of speaking; but because the eastern nations frequently represent human as well as divine powers, in a personal manner; and the early christians learning their christianity from the apostles, and other converted *jews*, were initiated and trained up in the phraseology of the eastern and *jewish* writers.

It is granted, indeed, that we know not how great the distinction is betwixt God the Father, and his eternal Word or wisdom: It is justly supposed to be great enough to lay a sufficient foundation for such a distinct personal representation, as the scriptural language and style give us. This divine Logos seems to be represented both in scripture, and in the primitive writers, as much distinct from the Father as the same essence admits of, or as distinct as may be, without being another conscious mind. Now this seems to be something more than a mere attribute; and therefore I call the Logos a divine power\*; imitating herein both the ancient *jews* and the primitive fathers, who call him frequently *Σοφία*, and *Νεϋ*, and *Δύναμις τῷ Θεῷ*, and particularly *Clemens Alexandrinus*, who makes him *πατριὴ τῆς ἐνέργειας*. But since God and his co-essential Word do not seem to have two distinct consciousnesses, or to be two conscious minds; this eternal Logos can hardly be called a person, in the common and literal sense of the term, as a distinct man or angel, but only in figurative and metaphorical language, as some zealous trinitarians have expressed it.

Let it be noted here also, that most of the ancient fathers which have been now cited, do not suppose this eternal Logos, to be an eternal Son; but that he became a Son by a certain generation, prolation, or filiation, which some of them call creation, some time before the world was created.

Some of the ancients, indeed, seem to apply the word Son, to this eternal Logos: And some of them have explained their meaning, that the Logos was *ἐνδύακτος*, *ἐν καρδίᾳ*, *ἐν σπλάγχνοις*, that is, conceived in the heart, in the bowels of the Father; that he was potentially in the Father, from eternity, though not actually produced: Which was also the express sense of some in the *Nicene* times, and of the emperor *Constantine*, as *Eusebius* relates it, in his letter to the people of *Cæsarea*.

Or there is another sense wherein the Logos, or eternal divine wisdom, may be called a Son as well as a person, by a figure of speech: For in the ancient eastern and scriptural idioms, any thing that has either a logical or a physical sort of dependence, is sometimes called son, or daughter. So the eternal wisdom, or reason, word, or will, flowing from the essence of God, may, possibly, be called a son. So, among our selves, knowledge, or intelligence, resulting from the essence of the human soul, may be called the offspring of the soul. And though I must confess, I doubt whether the scripture ever calls *Christ* the Son of God in this sense, yet where ancient writers use this form of speech, they may be interpreted in the same manner as later and more modern authors, who use the same phraseology, explain themselves; if there be no better interpretation to be put on their words.

*Austin* has written much of the trinity, and he often derives the Son from the Father, in such a manner as wisdom and knowledge is derived from the essence of the mind. The school-doctors, and the middle ages of the church, and some general councils, have spoken the same sort of language. *Calvin* and his followers describe what sonship they attribute to the eternal word, or wisdom, in this manner: And Mr. *Baxter*,

\* In what sense the Logos, or divine Word differs from an attribute; how it appears to be something analogous to a divine power; and how it is taken sometimes to signify the divine nature it self, exerting a particular power; the discourse on the "distinction of persons" in the trinity accounts for it. See dissertation VII.

ter, who differs from Calvin in other things, agrees with him in this. This has been a frequent representation of the sonship of the divine Word, among the most orthodox writers. It is in this manner the learned and ingenious doctor Wallis accounts for the sonship of the divine nature of Christ, in his "letters on the trinity," and many others of the modern and school trinitarian authors do the same.

Upon the whole it is plain, that the ancients generally, if not universally, suppose the "logos" to be a co-eternal power, belonging to God or the Father; though the most primitive writers do not generally express his proper distinct personality and sonship, until at, or some time before, the creation of the world. They suppose that there was then a generation, or a voluntary divine action put forth, whereby the Logos existed in a new state, and became the Son of God; and that it is in this sense that he is called in scripture, "the beginning of the creation of God, and the first-born of every creature." Rev. iii. 14. Col. i. 15. "And it was at this time according to some of the fathers, that the divine "logos," or eternal wisdom, began to have a personality, or, at least, a more distinct personality than it had before." "Baxter's methodus theologiae," page 96. line the last.

IV. I proceed now to shew that these ancient primitive fathers, believed the "logos" to be true God: And there is no need to labour in the proof of this, for since they describe him as a divine power eternally and essentially belonging to the godhead, it follows, that they must attribute proper deity to him, for every thing essential to deity is true God. What Mr. Baxter says in his "methodus theologiae de trinitate," seems to demand the assent of intelligent readers, "Christum esse dei λόγος. seu sapientiam, in ecclesia uno quasi ore pronunciatum esse, seculorum omnium testimonia probant. The testimonies of all ages of the church, pronounce, as it were with one mouth, that Christ is the Logos, the word or wisdom of God."

Let it be seriously considered, what a multitude of scriptures in the old testament, in which the one supreme God is plainly spoken of, are applied to Christ, or the Logos, by the primitive fathers: As, Gen. iii. 8, 9. "They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden, and the Lord God called to Adam." Gen. xix. 24. "The Lord, or Jehovab, rained upon Sodom, brimstone and fire from the Lord." Gen. xvii. 1, 2. "The Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, I am the almighty God." Gen. xxviii. 13. "The Lord stood above it, that is, Jacob's ladder, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac, &c." And many other texts there are, wherein the names, characters, and transactions of Jehovab, the Lord and God of Israel, are attributed by the fathers to the Logos, or Christ. While I have been reading in Justin Martyr's dialogue with Trypho the jew, how he directly ascribes to Christ, those sacred names of the Lord of hosts, the king of glory, God the Saviour, God the Lord, our God and our king, in the xxiv. and xlv. Psalms; and other illustrious divine titles in the xlv. lxiii. xcvi. Psalms, and elsewhere; I have been ready to wonder, how any writers could fairly deny true and eternal godhead to be attributed to Christ, by any of the primitive fathers.

Besides all this, when I consider the characters of supreme deity, and of perfect unity with the Father, even in the same substance, which are ascribed to the Logos, or to Christ, by the primitive writers, I think there is evident proof, that they supposed true godhead to belong to him. Their language represents him as an essential power of God himself. Origen says, "Let him that dares to say, there was a time when the Son was not, consider that he also says, there was a time when wisdom was not, and when light was not." And there are others of the ancients that argue just in the same manner, viz. that God could never be λόγος, or σοφία, that is, without his



word, his reason, and wisdom. *Origen* further asserts, that the "omnipotence of the Father and the Son is one and the same; as the Son is one and the same Lord and God with the Father." He calls him "the divine Word, who is God by nature." *Irenæus* calls him, *Ipse Deus*, or God himself; not another God, but the same God with the Father. This author abounds in expressions which make the Father and Son the one God. *Libro iv. capite 11.* "Qui igitur à prophetis adorabatur Deus vivus, hic est vivorum Deus, et verbum ejus qui locutus est *Moyse*, qui et *Sadducæos* redarguit, &c." And at the end of the chapter he concludes, "*Ipse igitur Christus cum Patre, vivorum est Deus.*" "He who was adored by the prophets as the living God, is the God of the living, *Mat. xxii. 32.* and his Word who spake to *Moses*, and refuted the *Sadducæes*. Therefore *Christ*, with the Father, is the God of the living." Again, he begins, *libro iii. capite 6.* in this manner, viz. "Neither the Lord, nor the holy Spirit; nor the apostles, would have definitively and absolutely called him God; who was not God, nor any one unless he were the true God." Then he goes on to shew, how *Christ* is called God, *Psal. xlv. 6.* "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." *Psal. l. 1.* "The God of gods, the Lord hath spoken;" on which he comments thus, "What God is this of whom it is said, God shall come, even our God; and shall not keep silence? This is the Son, who says openly, I am found of them who seek me not, &c."

If we consult the ancients, with one mouth they all declare, that God alone is to be worshipped; and yet they declare also for the worship of the Son, or the divine Word: And when I read these expressions, I cannot suffer my self to believe, that while they wrote those things, they could deny *Christ* to be the true God. It is evident to me, they believed his godhead.

But I forbid my self to proceed in this work: It seems to be a needless and useless thing, to prove that the Fathers, in a multitude of their expressions, asserted the true deity of the Logos, after those great and learned authors, bishop *Pearson*, bishop *Bull*, doctor *Waterland*, and doctor *Knight*, have done it so effectually, in their large and laboured writings.

V. The remaining sense in which the ancient *jewish* writers used the term Logos, is that of a "glorious angel, or arch-angel, formed before the creation of the world; called the first-born Son of God; the man after the image of God; the one man who is the father of all others; the beginning; the name of God;" and who was employed as a messenger to the ancient patriarchs, and an instrument, or medium, by which God transacted many other important affairs, with regard to this lower world. Now the great enquiry is, Whether the primitive christian fathers ever used the word "logos" in this sense.

Here I must acknowledge, that they speak with much confusion, and mingle the ideas of the increated or eternal Logos together with some inferior and creatural ideas; which they attribute also to the Logos. This would make one think, that some of them might have some obscure notices, intimations, and conceptions of this angelic Logos, as personally joined, and made one with the divine eternal Logos: Though neither the primitive christians, nor the ancient *jews*, keep the ideas of these two beings distinct; for sometimes they seem to attribute different, and seemingly inconsistent properties and actions to one and the same single "logos." But an enquiry into this matter is the business of the next section.

## S E C T I O N VI.

*An enquiry whether the most primitive christian fathers spake of the Logos as an angel, or a glorious spirit inferior to God.*

**T**HAT I may give some general idea of the language of the fathers on this subject, I will range their sentiments under these four heads.

I. They represent the Logos as being produced by, or derived from God the Father, by his will and power. He is called by some of the ancients, a birth, γέννημα; a production, πρῶκλημα; a second God, δεύτερος θεός; and, sometimes, θεός γενηθεῖς, a made God; and represented as being made God, θεοποιούμενος, by communication, or participation of the godhead of the Father. They speak frequently of the "Son's subordination to the Father, as to his being; of his proceeding, or leaping forth, or being produced from the Father by generation, being the first-born of every creature." They speak of his "existence, and his godhead being derived from the Father, together with all his power and glory:" "Of his receiving all that he has from the Father:" "Of his being generated by the power, by the will, and even by the design and council of the Father:" "Of his becoming God by the generation of the Father, which generation proceeded from his will." And *Tatian* calls him "a heavenly spirit, begotten by the Father; and the first-born work of the spirit," πρῶτόγονον ἔργον.

When they speak of God the Father, they greatly advance their style; they bear witness to his self-existent, unbegotten, and underived nature, and call him αὐτοθεός, that is, God of himself; which sort of expressions they utterly deny concerning the Son. When they explain that text, *John* xiv. 28. "The Father is greater than I," the ancients generally confess it to belong to *Christ* in his pre-existent nature, before his incarnation: And because the Father is the principle and original of the Son, therefore they say, he is greater.

It is true, they sometimes make the nature of the Father and Son the same: But they had such a settled belief and universal maxim among them, that the Father had some pre-eminence and prerogative above the Son, that they express his priority and superiority to the Son, in various forms of speech. Bishop *Bull* affirms this in "Defensione fidei nicaenae," sectione iv. capite 2. de subordinatione filii. And capite 1. he asserts, that "All the fathers without fear pronounced him principium, causa et autor filii, ἀρχή, αἰτία, & αὐτίαν τῷ ᾧ ἐστίν, the principle or spring, the cause, the author

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\* It is a frequent expression among the ancients, that *Christ* was begotten by the will, or counsel, and power of the Father: And I humbly conceive, that the ancients in these places, speak of the temporal, voluntary and ante-mundane generation of the Son, and not of his eternal existence. The common sense of these expressions, by the will of God, or by the power of God, in scripture, doth not imply a necessity of nature, but arbitrary will. So *St. Paul* is often called an apostle by the will of God: And there are above thirty places in the new testament, where the will of God carries the same idea. And throughout all the bible, when things are said to exist, or come to pass by the power of God, I think it always implies the voluntary, or arbitrary exercise of divine power. And the most early fathers use these phrases in the same sense. Let it be observed also, That in the same primitive writers I have found the same phrase, "By the will of God," used several times, and applied to the incarnation of *Christ*, or his mission into this world by the will of the Father; which is, certainly, his arbitrary will. I might add also, that bishop *Bull* himself, speaking of the generation of *Christ*, θελῶντι καὶ βουλῇ, by the will and counsel of the Father, declares, "Frustra sudant theologi, ut hæc dicta concilient cum æterna filii generatione." Breves animadversiones in *Gilbertum Clerk*. Annotata ad paginam 117.



thor of the Son, the cause of his being ;" as well as that the Father is said to be the spring of his godhead and power. He is the fountain, the root, the head of the Son, and has the peculiar title of the only true God. And as the Father is the cause, so the Son is *ἀντιστάς*, the thing, or person, caused. And bishop Bull expressly grants, that in the sense of the fathers, and in his own opinion, "The Son received not only his person, but his nature and deity from the Father." See "Defensionem fidei nicaenae," sectione iv. capite. 1. § 7.

II. The Logos is not only represented by these writers as generated, and existing by the will and power of God, but a great part of the ante-nicene fathers, and some of the post-nicenes also represent the procession, prolation, production, or generation of the Son, as temporary, and at some time before this world was made ; or in order to form, make, or to adorn this world.

It must be confessed, that the post-nicene writers speak more of the eternal generation than the primitive ancients had done, yet they make his ante-mundane production from the Father to be a generation also, and suppose this to be voluntary as well as temporal.

Though all of them grant the co-eternal existence of the Logos, as a divine power, as the reason or wisdom of God, and in this sense some of them say, the Father was always a Father, and never was without the Son, considered as the internal word, wisdom or reason of God, or considering God the Father, as having the Son always potentially within him, yet many of the most early writers make the generation, and distinct Sonship of the Logos, to be temporary and voluntary, and ante-mundane, and speak not plainly of any other, as *Justin*, *Atbenagoras*, *Theophilus*, and several more besides them. Some of the most ingenious, and learned defenders of the eternal godhead of *Christ*, have constantly allowed the highest generation of the Son, spoken of by *Justin*, and several others of the fathers, to be temporal, and that, perhaps, even the nicene bishops, meant the same, when they call the Son light of light, &c.

*Tertullian* saith plainly, "Though God is a Father, yet he was not always a Father, for he could not be a Father before there was a Son, now there was a time when the Son was not." He speaks always of the generation of the Son as a voluntary thing, and brought about in time : He calls this the "perfecta nativitas sermonis," though the "logos," considered as reason, was in the heart of God from eternity. So *Theophilus*, libro ii. ad *Autolyicum*, speaks of the λόγος which was always ἐνδιὰβηθαι ἐν καρδίᾳ θεοῦ, but afterwards God generated and produced this Word, τῶν τὸν λόγον ἐγέννησε προφύρικτον, πρωτότοκον πάσης κτίσεως. *Clemens Alexandrinus*, who is a zealous assertor of the deity of the Logos, the divine word or wisdom, speaks of the Son of God as πρωτόκτιστος σοφία, the first created wisdom : And many of the fathers speak of σοφία, or wisdom, as created, when God sent her forth to make the world, and they imitate herein the words of the LXX, in *Prov.* viii. 22. "where wisdom saith, "The Lord created me the beginning of his ways." Κύριος ἔκτισέ με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ, or he made me as his first way towards his other works, as some of them seem to explain it.

Not only the most ancient writers, but even some in the times of the nicene council had this notion of the eternal existence of the Logos in God the Father, and the production of him as a distinct Son in Time, or at least, not co-eternally. For *Atbanasius* himself speaking concerning *Christ*, or the Word, says, "He who had an existence before was afterward begotten into a Son, τὸν ὄντα πρότερον, ὕστερον γεννηθέντα εἰς υἱόν."

vid. And the emperor *Constantine*, in *Eusebius's* letter to the church at *Cæsarea*, says, that "with respect to his divine generation he had a prior existence before all ages, forasmuch as before his actual generation he was potentially in the Father after an unbegotten manner." And this we may suppose they spoke in direct opposition to the *arian* error, who denied *Christ* to be any thing before he was begotten or born, and which was one of the errors which was anathematized in the council.

Let it be noted also, that though the distinct generation of the Son is not supposed to be co-eternal with the existence of the Logos in the heart of the Father, yet it is by some of the ancients described as before all worlds or ages, *πρὸ πάντων αἰώνων*, and that must be in some unknown moment of the divine eternity.

III. This Logos, or Son of God, is represented under various other characters, which seem to denote an inferiority to the supreme God over all, and would lead one to suppose, they might have some idea of an angelic being. He is called frequently an angel by the ancients, and yet they say, "It is impious to call the supreme God over all an angel." He is acknowledged to "receive all his power from the Father, and that he is subject to the Father; that in all things he ministers to the will of the Father, and acts by his authority:" He is sometimes said *ὑπηρετῶν τῷ ὑπερυψίῳ*, to serve the Father or to work under him; that he is not stronger than the Father, but inferior or weaker, so *Origen*, *ὁ ἐλαττωτέρος ἀλλ' ὑποδείκτερος*. That the Father is stronger, more powerful, more sublime, than the Son, So *Tertullian*. "Innatum nato fortius; infectum facto validius; quod, ut esset, nullius eguit auctoris, multo sublimius erit eo, quod, ut esset, aliquem habuit autorem. Contra *Hermogenem*, capite xviii. That the Son is the second God, or the next power after the first God; that he pays due honour to the Father by calling him "The only true God," *John* xvii. 3. owning "the Father to be greater than he," *John* xiv. 28. and all this with regard to his pre-existent nature before his incarnation.

The learned bishop *Bull*, that excellent defender of the deity of *Christ*, in his defence of the nicene faith, section iv. chapter 3. acknowledges that "almost all the catholics before the days of *Arius* seem not to have known the invisible and immense nature of the Son of God, and they spake sometimes of him as though, even according to his divine nature, he were finite, visible, included in a certain place, and circumscribed in certain limits, while they, at the same time assert, and prove the Father to be immense, to fill all places, and to be included in none. Thence they infer, that it is not the Father that appeared as God and *Jehovah* to the patriarchs, but the Son." For this he cites *Justin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, *Novatian*, and mentions also *Theophilus*, *Irenæus*, *Origen*, and six other bishops, as speaking the same sort of language\*. I confess, bishop *Bull* attempts a solution of this difficulty, both in that treatise, and in his remarks on *Gilbert Clerk*, and excuses the fathers, by "assigning invisibility to the real nature of the Son, but visibility to his oeconomic character; it being decent and agreeable that the Son should exhibit sensible tokens of his presence in certain places rather than the Father; because he had undertaken, even from the fall of man, to be a mediator, and thus gave some pre-significations of his incarnate state, being sent by the Father to appear amongst men." But the various manners of solving these difficulties shall be considered more particularly in the following section; I insert this account of the writings of the ancients in this place, only as

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\* It is worthy our notice, that *Philo the jew*, in his book "De somniis," speaks the same language too, asserting that the "true God cannot be seen," but when he appeared to men it was in the form of an angel, of his most ancient and sacred Word, who is his deputy.



an intimation, that it is possible the ancients might have some confused idea of an inferior nature belonging to the Son before his incarnation.

IV. Another circumstance that would lead one to think, that some of the primitive ancients might have some intimations of a Logos inferior to God, is, that they assert the very Logos himself to be made passible, and to suffer upon the cross; and that in a real and proper manner the Logos, or Word, was sensible of the sorrows which *Christ* endured for our sakes. Now we cannot suppose that they ever imagined that Logos, which was the eternal word, or wisdom of God, to become passible, or to suffer pain or sorrow, any otherwise than in a mere relative manner, that is, as it was united to that soul and body which did suffer; for every thing of godhead is for ever impassible. And for this reason, when they write against the *Patristians*, they abominate the thought of God the Father becoming passible. But there is a Logos which they suppose to become passible, and actually to feel and suffer shame and sorrow: It seems to be the labour of their expression, and the very thing in view, to shew, that the Word itself was passible and suffered. *Irenæus* was engaged in his writings against those who supposed that *Christ* fled away and left *Jesus* only to suffer, because they imagined that the true *Christ* was always impassible, and therefore his business was to shew, that the Word, the Son of God, became passible and suffered. See libro iii. capite 17, 18. and several other places. And *Justin Martyr*, in his dialogue with *Trypho*, speaks of the Son of God being *ἀνθρώπος ἐν πάθει*, really in sufferings for us; and *λόγον παθόντα*, the word suffering\*. Thence I infer they might have some notion of a Logos inferior to godhead.

These are the four particulars whereby I proposed to enquire, whether the primitive fathers of the christian church might be supposed to have any notion of an angelic Logos, who is the Son of God, and yet inferior to the divine Logos, or the eternal word, or wisdom, of the Father.

I have now finished my account of the Logos, as exhibited in the ancient christian writers. I dare not pronounce them all of one mind in the things I have mentioned, nor that the same authors are always steady in asserting the same things, either in a consistence with themselves, or with one another: But I think in the main, these opinions which I have recited in these two last sections concerning the Logos, seem to be the more general sense of the primitive fathers, before the controversy of *Arius* arose, or the council of *Nice* was called: And it is known also, that some of the ancients, both at that time, and afterward, express themselves almost in the same manner.

\* It is granted, that some of the ancients might perhaps believe a certain animal soul in *Christ* considered as a man, which was the immediate subject of the sensations of wounding, scourging, nailing, &c. for their philosophy did hardly suppose the rational soul in man to be capable of these sensations. But it seems to be their general apprehension that the Logos or Word itself did really and truly sustain, if not sensible pain, yet, sorrows and afflictions, in opposition to those who asserted him to suffer only putative, that is, relatively, or by construction.

## S E C T I O N VII.

*A humble attempt to reconcile the difficulties arising from the various expressions of the primitive fathers.*

Whoever reads all this variety of language concerning the Logos, in these two last sections, where he is represented in the sublime characters of true and eternal godhead, and in the inferior characters of a dependent being, must readily confess that there is some difficulty in reconciling them.

From these different expressions of the primitive fathers arises the controversy in the church in later ages, concerning their sentiments of the godhead of *Christ*.

The *arians*, and all the rest who imitate their opinions, finding such a multitude of phrases, and forms of speech in these primitive writers, wherein the Logos is sunk below the dignity of godhead, they are tempted utterly to deny the true and proper deity of the Logos. And either they interpret the most sublime and divine characters given to the Logos in a rhetorical way, and reduce them to an inferior sense, by a hard and unreasonable strain of the words, or else they drop the sublimest expressions, as not belonging to *Christ*, or as inconsistent with the inferior characters given him; and then applying the inferior expressions only to him, they claim these ancients entirely on their side, though I think, without just reason.

The *athanasians*, together with the scholastic trinitarians, and all their followers, reading the several glorious, eternal, and divine characters, ascribed to the Logos, plainly find, that the ancients believed him to have true and proper godhead; and I think they prove it with sufficient brightness and evidence. But they are sometimes hard put to it to find out methods of accounting, how all the inferior and creatural characters may be given to the self-same Logos.

Were there not such a number of expressions in these ancient writers which ascribe so different, and seemingly inconsistent characters, viz. both the properties of God, and a creature, to the Logos, we can hardly suppose that modern writers of such sense and sagacity, such probity and great learning, could run into so different extremes, could maintain such warm contentions to defend their own opinions, which are so widely distant, and that each should alledge and believe the ancient fathers to be on their side. There seems to be so much darkness and perplexity amongst the fathers in this matter, as constrained bishop *Bull*, that great and sincere defender of the deity of *Christ*, to call some of their expressions "parum cautæ locutiones, duræ, et incommodæ, &c." He makes a honest and ingenuous complaint on this occasion, "ad mira hæc patrum dicta quis non planè obstupefcat? Quo *σοφῶν ἀρρηκτὰ* istius modi ipsorum dicta sanari possunt?" *Defensione fidei nicaenæ, sectione iv. capite 3. § 4.* And in the beginning of this chapter he mentions a particular set of expressions concerning the visibility and locality of the Son, and the invisibility and unconfineableness of the Father, which run through almost all the monuments of the primitive writers, and which seem to contradict the deity of the Son, and this is, says he, nodus vindice dignissimus, fateor me ad istum lapidem olim offendisse, &c. The sense, in english, is this. "These are hard sayings, uncautious expressions, and inconvenient speeches. Who is there would not stand amazed at such strange expressions of the fathers? What wise and happy method will reconcile them? What medicine will make them sound?"



found? This is a difficulty worthy of a solution; I confess I was once ready to stumble at this stone:" &c. So hard is it for a honest and good man not to acknowledge the perplexity, darkness, and seeming inconsistency of those venerable writers, on this subject! And the reverend doctor *Waterland*, with the same ingenuity, now and then confesses the difficulty of reconciling some of their expressions, and gives up a few of them, as improprieties or mistakes.

I might take notice here also, that there are some writers of name and worth among the *athanasians*, that speak with more freedom, and plainly declare, that several of the ancients, by their frequent ascriptions of creatural ideas to the Logos, laid a foundation for *arianism* in the following ages, and therefore they will not abide by their sentiments, nor pretend to vindicate or excuse their expressions, because they cannot be all applied to the divine nature of *Christ*.

But let us consider more particularly, how the learned authors among the *athanasians*, who are most favourable to the ancients, attempt to remove this stumbling block. So far as I can gather light from their several works, they seem to depend upon these following principles of solution.

I. That the temporal and voluntary generation of the Logos, which is the only generation many of the anti-nicene fathers speak of, is not properly a generation, but a mere manifestation of him, when God created the world by this Logos, or Word; and that he was, indeed, eternally, and properly, a distinct person from God the Father, and that he was the Son of God from all eternity, though he was not discovered as such until the creation. All these words, of generation, prolation, production, &c. therefore must mean nothing but manifestation. They make his eternal existence to arise from eternal generation, which those ancients do not mention, and they make his procession to create the world to be no real generation, which is the only generation those ancients speak of.

And they add further, that where the Logos is said to be "begotten, or produced by the will, counsel, and power of God," when these words refer to this "temporary, ante-mundane generation, or manifestation," they may signify the free or arbitrary will of God the Father: But if ever these words do refer to the eternal, and proper generation of the Son, that is, his emanation from the Father, then they must signify nothing but the acquiescence, or consent of the Father, to the natural and necessary emanation of this Logos, or co-eternal Son.

II. Some of the *athanasians* suppose there may be some "real and natural subordination of an eternal Son to an eternal Father, though the divine nature be equal in them both," and that is, by supposing the Father only to be self-existent and independent, and by referring the Son's existence, and his godhead and power to the Father, as the spring and fountain of it, from which it is derived by way of natural and necessary emanation; and they think that this will account for all those inferior sort of expressions which are used concerning the derivation of the Logos from God the Father, and the Father being greater than the Son.

III. They add in the next place, that the distinctions of priority and posteriority of order between the Father and the Son, even in the divine nature, will solve many of the expressions of the Fathers without a real subordination of nature.

IV. Another principle of accommodation is this, That the Son, though equal to the Father in nature, or essence, yet is oeconomically subordinate, that is, it is appointed in the dispensations of God toward his creatures, that the Son should act an obedient and subjective part by the relation in which he stands, and the office which he

sustains

sustains with regard to God and creatures : And that all this may be done by the divine condescension of the eternal Logos ; and thus the inferior and creatural sort of expressions applied to the Logos by the primitive fathers, must be construed œconomically.

V. They suppose, in the last place, that the eternity and necessity of the existence of the Son, are sufficient to secure his true and proper deity, even though it be really derived from the Father, and therefore cannot be self-existent. They suppose also, that the eternal, necessary, and inseparable union of the Father, Son, and Spirit, is sufficient to secure the unity of the godhead, though they be really three distinct, intelligent agents or natures, and proper, different persons, almost in the complete and literal sense of the words as used among men.

I shall not make it my business to attempt to destroy any of these solutions. I freely acknowledge, that these methods of reconciling the strange, and jarring expressions of the primitive writers, are candid and ingenious ; and some of them have some colour and support from scripture, as well as from the writings of the fathers themselves ; yet after all the mollifying constructions of interpreters, I think still the difficulties can scarce be solved upon that hypothesis, without allowing too many "catchrefes," and too hard figures of speech, by speaking of God like a creature, and of a creature like God. These lay a foundation for very obscure and perplexed ideas, and thereby introduce perpetual contests betwixt learned men, concerning the sense of the fathers.

May it not be lawful therefore, to propose another method of reconciling the various, and seeming inconsistent expressions of the primitive fathers concerning the Logos ? The proposal is as follows.

If the same single subject, the same simple Logos, cannot sustain such different and contrary characters, let us enquire, whether the Logos be not a complex subject, made up of two distinct subjects, each of which has had the appellation of Logos, or the Word, both in the *jewish* and christian writings ?

May we not suppose the Logos, or Word, considered as something in the godhead analogous to a power or virtue, to be infinite, uncreated, co-essential, and co-eternal with God the Father, as being of his very essence, and in this sense true God ? May not this sometimes be represented in a personal manner as distinct from the Father ? Would not this be the proper subject of the most sublime attributions given to the Logos ?

May we not suppose also, that in some unknown moment of the divine eternity, God, by his sovereign will and power, produced a glorious spirit in an immediate manner, and in a very near likeness to himself, and called him his Son, his only begotten Son ? Would not this be a proper subject for all the inferior attributions ? Might not this be that Logos of *Philo*, and the other ancient *jews*, who was called the first born of God, the eldest arch-angel, the man after God's own image ? &c. and might not this be the human soul of our blessed Saviour ?

Supposing further this angelic spirit to be assumed into a personal union with the divine Logos, from the first moment of his existence, might he not be called the Son of God also, upon this account ? May it not be said, that true godhead is communicated to the Son of God in this manner, and that by the free will of the Father ? "For it pleased the Father that the fulness of the godhead should dwell in him." *Col. i. 19.* And in this sense the Father may be called the author and the cause both of his existence, his godhead, and all his powers ; for though the godhead of the Logos, or divine wisdom be essential to the nature of God, and eternally independent, yet it may be communicated, that is, united, to an inferior spirit, by the will of the Father, without



out any diminution of it's divine independency. Now by virtue of this personal union, or inhabitation, of the divine mind, or wisdom, in this glorious angelic being, the Son becomes more eminently the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person.

Then will it not follow, that this whole complex being, viz. God and a creature, might be that Logos, or Word of God, which the scripture so frequently speaks of in the old and new testament? Might not this be the glorious God-angel, who appeared to the patriarchs, as an angel, and as a man; and assumed the names and titles of God, *Jehovah*, the almighty, the God of *Abraham*? &c. Might not this be that sacred Logos, that Word of the Lord, who visited the prophets, and holy men of old, and brought divine messages to them? Might not this be that God, and *Jehovah*, who led the *Israelites* through the red sea, in the pillar of cloud, and fire, and that *Christ* whom they tempted in the wilderness? In short, might not this be that Logos, or glorious person, called the Word of God, by whom God transacted all his ancient affairs in the creation of the world, and in the government of his church? And would not this complex being be a proper subject, to receive either the divine or creatural ascriptions which are given to *Christ* in scripture, and in the ancient fathers?

Might not this Logos, in the complex character of God and a creature, or the Son of God inhabited personally by eternal wisdom, according to scripture, in the fulness of time assume flesh and blood into union with himself? Might he not thus be made in the likeness of man, become complete God-man, and be sent into this world that he might become a redeemer and Saviour, by his death, his resurrection, and his succeeding advancement in heaven?

May not this be the true scriptural notion and description of the person of *Christ*, or God incarnate, God manifest in the flesh? Is not this that Son of God who is one with the Father, as he is the wisdom of God? Who was the angel of the Lord, and the angel of the covenant, as he was the soul of *Christ* before his incarnation? And who is the man *Jesus*, the perfect mediator, since he was made partaker of flesh and blood? And may not this be supposed to be the easiest and happiest way of reconciling the different and almost inconsistent characters, which are attributed to the Logos by the ancients? Where one single being is not a sufficient subject to sustain both characters, a complex subject may easily sustain them.

So some of the ancient philosophers supposed man to be one single being, and attributed all the powers and properties both of reason and vegetation, to the human animal: But the moderns having well considered, that the powers of reasoning, and the powers of vegetation, cannot belong to the same simple subject, one being the property of matter, and the other of mind, they are led necessarily to infer, that man is a compound being, made up both of matter and mind: The scripture itself also confirms this inference, and assures us of the truth of it, by making the soul and body of man two distinct beings.

Thus scripture and reason seem to agree to inform us, that as man, with his distinct properties of reason and vegetation is composed of body and spirit; so they lead us to suppose, that the pre-existent nature of *Christ*, which is called the Logos, is composed, or constituted of God and a creature, or an inferior spirit, personally inhabited by the divine Word, to which the distinct properties of God and a creature may be attributed.

S E C T I O N VIII.

*Considerations which tend to support this construction of the primitive fathers.*

Consideration I. **T**HE ancient *jews*, viz. the *targumists*, or commentators, and *Philo*, give us these descriptions, both of a divine and an inferior Logos, and they seem to have borrowed them from the bible, and their old traditional expositions of it. Let it be observed now, that these persons lived near the time when the new testament was written, and that the apostles themselves were *jews*, and used the phrases of their country, and that the primitive christians learned their notions of theology from the apostles, and from others of the first christians, who were themselves converted *jews*. Thence we may naturally and easily suppose, that those phrases, idioms, sentiments, and manners of thinking and speaking, which were borrowed by the *jews* from their traditional sense of the old testament, might be the common and most natural language and sentiments of the first christians. The phrases and notions of both of them concerning the Logos, have something akin, and the strain of their expressions are plainly tinged by similar and correspondent ideas.

Consideration II. It is evident, from what we have said before, that the holy scripture gives the name of Logos, or Word of God, to a certain power of the divine nature, whereby all things were created, *Psal.* xxiii. 6. and *2 Pet.* iii. 5. It gives the same name also to our blessed Saviour in his incarnate state, *1 John* i. 1, 2. and *Rev.* xix. 13. So that here is a Logos who is true God, and a Logos who is a man.

It is also manifest, that our Saviour, since his incarnation is a complex person: "He is the child born, and the mighty God:" *Isai.* ix. 6. "He is God manifest in the flesh:" *1 Tim.* iii. 16. "He is a man of the seed of *David*, and God over all, blessed for ever." *Rom.* ix. 5.

It is generally agreed also, that before his incarnation, he was the angel of the Lord, and also the almighty God: He was "the God who fed *Jacob*, and the angel who redeemed him:" *Gen.* xlviii. 15, 16. "He was the man who wrestled with *Jacob*, and God, the Lord of hosts, whose name and memorial is *Jebovah*," *Gen.* xxxii. 24. and *Hosea* xii. 5. which seem to imply a complex nature, as I have manifested at large in another discourse, "of the glory of *Christ* as God-man."\*

Now since the scripture has revealed to us a superior and inferior nature in *Christ*, to sustain the divine and creatural characters attributed to him, why may we not suppose the primitive fathers, under the influence of these scriptural representations, might be led to attribute both divine and creatural characters to *Christ*, the Logos, the Son of God, in his pre-existent state, though they do not evidently keep up the just and distinct ideas of two beings, united in one complex person.

Consideration III. Perhaps this construction of the ancient christian writers, may be the easiest and happiest method of reconciling their strange and jarring expressions, both to one another, and to scripture; and, perhaps, it may be the only, or, at least, the best way, whereby we can affix clear, distinct, and intelligible ideas to them. Let us make a few experiments.

When *Theophilus* says, the Logos, or eternal word, which was always in the heart of God, was afterwards produced, generated, and became a son; this may be explained, by God's producing a human spirit, or angelic Logos, a first-born Son, by a voluntary act of his will, and then assuming this first-born Son into a personal union with

\* This discourse was published in 1746.



with his divine word, or wisdom: And thus he made this divine Word become his Son. The divine Word which had an existence before, was then made his Son, by union with his Son. And this is very agreeable to scripture language; for when in *John* i. 14. "The Word is said to be made flesh," all christians agree, that it signifies only, that flesh was assumed into a personal union with the Word.

If *Justin Martyr*, who in the judgment of the learned, speaks the sense of the other ante-nicene fathers, assert the Logos "always to have co-existed with the Father, and that he was then begotten, when God by him created the world;" this may be exactly explained in the same manner as *Theophilus*: And all the rest of the fathers, before and after the council of *Nice*, who speak of the Logos existing eternally with God, before he was generated and became a Son, may be interpreted in the same manner.

When they speak of the generation of the Son, by the will and power of God the Father; when they assert the Father to be the cause, fountain, spring of his existence, and of all his powers; when they call him *conditio*, δημιουργημα, κτισμα; a creature, and the first-born work of the Spirit, &c. Here is an angelic Logos, or human soul, a proper subject for those inferior ascriptions.

And when the Father is said to be the author of his godhead, or to communicate godhead to him, this is done by the Father's voluntary act, of uniting the divine Logos, that is, his own eternal word or wisdom to this angelic spirit, and by this union the angelic Logos becomes true God, and the more express image of the Father.

If the ancients speak of the divine wisdom, as being created, first-created, the first of the works of God: If they call the Logos, God of God, the second God, light of light, &c. since it is granted these expressions may have a reference to the temporal ante-mundane generation, they may all be explained by the real derivation or production of the angelic Logos from God, who in the first moment of his existence was united to and made one with God's eternal Logos, that is, his divine word, or wisdom, and thus became a glorious and proper medium of God's manifestations and operations, which is the ancient and original notion of the *Λόγος*, or word.

As the divine Logos becomes the Son of God, and receives inferior attributions, by a personal union to the angelic Logos, who is God's first born Son, so the angelic Logos, or human soul of *Christ*, who is properly the Son of God, becomes true God, and receives supreme attributions, by his most intimate and personal union with the divine Logos, or godhead, and thereby becoming one complex person of action and passion. The common figure of the "*communicatio idiomatum*," in all languages, makes this very easy and intelligible.

Thus in the language of philosophy, and the schools, when man is called a rational animal, we do not suppose that an animal body can be the subject of rational properties; but the animal is made rational by being personally united to a rational spirit, and thereby becoming one person, one complex principle of action and passion.

This would account also for any such expressions, as an inferior nature being made God, θεοποιημενος, by a participation of the godhead of the Father. The human or angelic Logos, who is most properly the Son of God, was made, or became God, by the union of the divine Logos to him, even as in scripture language, "The Word became flesh," by the union of the flesh to him, *John* i. 14. And in the same sense *Justin Martyr* calls the Logos σαρκωομενης, made flesh. Nor is it strange that any expressions of *Origen* should be so interpreted; when we consider that he supposes the soul and body of *Christ*, even the whole man; to be made partaker of godhead, and to pass into God, or become God in the same manner, κακοινωνησθαι τῆς θεότητος εἰς θεὸν μετασχηματίζεσθαι, contra

contra *Celsum*, libro iii. And the council of *Antioch* says, "The body that was born of the virgin was united to godhead, and was made God, τῇ θεότητι ἕνωται καὶ θεοποιεῖται.

This hypothesis easily explains how the Logos comes to be called the angel, for in his lower nature he is a separate created spirit, and thus may well be called the messenger, the minister, the servant of his Father. This shews how he is subject to the Father in all things, how he is employed, and sent by the Father on various transactions, how he derives his godhead from the Father, how the Father is God originally, and of himself; how the Son acknowledges the Father to be eminently the only true God, though the eternal deity of the Father and the Son be really the same.

This supposition also makes it easy to conceive, how the Logos himself might become passible, and condescend to endure the sensation of sorrow, pain, and dying agonies: For if we suppose this angelic Logos to be the human soul of *Jesus Christ*, then as it was united to godhead in it's pre-existent state, and often appeared in the form and majesty of God, so it was united to a human body at the incarnation, it emptied itself of it's ancient glory, ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτὸν, *Phil.* ii. 7. and became subject to the weaknesses, and the painful sensations of animal nature. Thus the Son of God himself really and truly suffered on the cross for sinners. A glorious and unparalleled example of humility, and amazing love, exerted in such a manner as the vulgar explanations of this doctrine could never shew!

Thus I have given my reasons briefly for supposing, that many of the expressions of the ancients may be construed into the notion of a complex Logos, or a double nature belonging to *Christ* before his incarnation, viz. the divine Word, and a created, or inferior spirit.

Objection. But it will be readily and immediately objected against all this discourse, that it is in vain for us to contrive suppositions, and invent schemes, how the language and expressions of the primitive fathers may be understood, when it is sufficiently evident from a multitude of places in their own writings, that they had no such notion of a complex Logos, made up of two distinct beings, viz. the true God, and an inferior spirit: It is manifest that they had but one single idea under the term Logos, and they ascribed all the superior and inferior characters to the same single spirit.

Answer I. If a man were to begin, and read over all the fathers with this very view and design, to search for a complex Logos, it is probable that he might find this opinion favoured in more of their expressions, since several of those ancients with whom I have the greatest acquaintance, use so many expressions that can hardly be construed into any just consistence any other way. Nor is this a mere fond, and imaginary conjecture of my own: The learned author of "*primitive christianity vindicated*, against Mr. *Whiston*, in his second letter to the author of the history of *Montanism*," seems to indulge this opinion. He tells us that *Origen* supposed the human soul of *Christ*, united to his divine nature, to exist long before his incarnation. See page 43. "It is, says this author, a very ancient tradition among the *jews*, that the soul of the *Messiah* existed from the beginning of the world. And some learned men are of opinion, that certain passages of scripture cannot be so easily and naturally interpreted without this notion: Such as *John* iii. 13. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man, which is, or was, in heaven;" and *Phil.* ii. 7. "That he emptied himself." *Origen* was no stranger to this opinion, when he says, "perhaps the soul of the Son in it's perfection, was in God, and his fulness, and coming out thence when he was sent by the Father, took a body of *Mary*." And again, upon these words of *John* the baptist, "After me cometh a man which is preferred before me, for he was before me," *John* i. 30. He says thus, "That it



is spoken of *Christ*, that we may learn that the man, or manhood, also of the Son of God, mixed with his divinity, had a prior subsistence to his birth of the virgin. This man, says the learned author, must be the rational soul; which is confirmed by the appearances of the *Messiah* made to the patriarchs and *jewish* fathers in the form of a man, the proper indication of a human soul. Hence then we may justly infer, that the rational soul, united to the Word, was the first created essence, or first fruits of the creation, holy to the Lord, and claimed by the Son as his own right. For if he was to be first, or have the pre-eminence in all things, can that advantage be denied him in relation to his soul? *Origen*, who holds it's pre-existence, seems to allow it to be first created. For speaking of the formation of wisdom before the world, he says, God created *ἐμψυχὸς σοφία*, an animated wisdom, or, wisdom with a soul. In another place he calls this, *ἐμψυχὸς λόγος*. And this opinion appeared so very reasonable, that we find some marks of it in the later centuries. For the author of the meditations called *St. Austin's*, distinguishes between eternal wisdom, the Son of God, and the first created wisdom; which he makes to be a rational and intellectual mind.

Again, the same learned author, in his "considerations on Mr. *Whiston's* historical preface," pages 55, 56. supposes, "The Son of God may be called *πρῶτον, κτῆμα*, &c. not only in respect of his coming forth to create the world, in which sense he is the beginning of all things, but also in respect of a created intellectual nature, which he is supposed, by some, to have assumed at the beginning of the creation, as the first fruits of it." And the same author grants, that "he may, perhaps, be mentioned oftener by the ancient fathers in relation to his coming forth, and to his created nature, than his eternal subsistence." And if it should be so in scripture too, which he doth not actually grant, yet he proposes this reason for it, viz. "That it concerns us, more to know him in this state of humility and condescension, than in that of his natural immensity and exaltation, since it is owing to his humility that we are both made and redeemed." Now the author from whom I cite these passages has testified both his zeal and his learning in several of his works against the *arian* cause.

The late reverend bishop *Fowler*, in his "defense of his discourse of the descent of the man *Christ Jesus*," gives his testimony also, that *Origen* was of this opinion: And perhaps this might be the occasion why that ancient writer sometimes exalts the *Logos* to such sublime characters of divinity, as represent him to be *αὐτοσοφία*, &c. the very wisdom, the very truth of God himself, and makes him co-eternal with the Father, and at other times calls him *θεὸς δ' ὕστερος, θεὸς γεννῆς, θεοποιούμενος*, &c. a second God, a made God, &c.

I have also the concurring suffrage of Mr. *Baxter*, in his "methodus theologiae," page 96. he seems to be of this opinion concerning some of the fathers, by what observations he had made in reading the ancients. For when he had there recited several of the expressions of the primitive fathers, viz. *Justin, Tatian, Theophilus, Irenaeus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Dionysius Alexandrinus*, &c. he adds, "et videntur quidem eorum seculorum nonnulli putasse duplicem in Christo nondum incarnato naturam fuisse; primam divinam, quā sapientia Dei seu λόγος æternus fuit, & secundam, quam solam *Arius* agnovit, creatam, super-angelicam, creaturarum primogenitam, & administrantem. Some of the writers of those ages seem to think there were two natures in *Christ* before his incarnation: The first divine, whereby he was the wisdom of God, or his eternal Word: The second a super-angelic, created nature, first born of creatures, ministering to God, &c. which is the only nature the *arians* allow." And the author adds, that "*Gregory Thaumaturgus* seems to have believed this double nature." I confess I was surprized, when I had almost finished this dissertation, to find such a

sentence

sentence in this learned author. And it is evident that nothing but the various expressions of the fathers themselves could have constrained him to have spoken thus, since Mr. *Baxter* himself did not approve of this opinion; but it is plain that he could hardly interpret some of the fathers into any other sense.

Answer II. Yet I readily grant, and believe, that the greatest part of them do not seem to have any distinct idea of a complex Logos, or a double nature in *Christ* before the incarnation; for they frequently seem to apply both increated and created characters to the same single being. But the question is, whether a reader can have any clear and distinct ideas under this language of their's? Whether they can be made to talk very consistently with themselves in this strange phraseology? Are we not forced to correct the philosophy of those ancients, who apply rationality and vegetation to man as one simple animal substance? Do we not plainly find, that, though their ideas are right in general, when they ascribe both these to man, yet they mistook a complex for a simple being? And might not the primitive fathers fall into such an innocent mistake in theology, when they determined too hastily, that both the divine and inferior ideas ascribed to *Christ* in his pre-existent state belonged to one simple Logos? Will all their invented relief of natural subordination, of oeconomical subordination, of strong metaphors, and "catachrefes," ever fairly reconcile the variety, and seeming contradiction of their expressions, without such a supposition as this, of a complex, or twofold nature in *Christ*?

We may reasonably suppose, that they had derived from scripture, and from the apostles, and the traditions of apostolic men, the great doctrine of the Logos, being the eternal divine word, or wisdom, whereby God contrived and created the world; They had also derived from the same springs the doctrine of the Logos, who was the Son of God, the beginning of the creation, the first-born of every creature, the only begotten of the Father; and that though he was produced, as they express, by his will and power, yet it was in some such immediate and superior way, as is rather called generation than creation in scripture, that in all things *Christ* might have the pre-eminence, *Col. i. 18.*

Now hence perhaps might arise some of their mistakes, or, as bishop *Bull* calls them, their strange, hard, and uncautious expressions.

1. Because scripture, or apostolic tradition, doth not directly call this inferior, or angelic Logos, who was the Son of God, a creature, and rank him with other created beings, some of them might raise him entirely up to godhead, and give him the very same, simple, numerical idea, with the eternal Logos, or the divine wisdom.

2. Because this angelic Logos was truly the Son of God, and his only begotten Son, therefore they might attribute a sort of sonship to the eternal Logos, or divine wisdom, entirely abstracted from this angelic being.

3. When they found supreme and inferior characters attributed to a person, whose name was the Logos, or Word of God, they did not infer the union of the divine eternal Logos, and of this first-born Son of God, who is also called the Logos, into one complex person, but they, by an easy mistake, might blend them together into one simple substance; and thus they attributed inconsistent properties and actions to one and the same simple subject. Whereas scripture seems to inform us, that these different properties might be more safely and happily attributed to this glorious person, composed of the divine and the angelic Logos united, that is, the human soul of *Christ* with the indwelling godhead.



## SECTION IX.

## CONCLUSION.

UPON the whole it appears, that the ancient *jewish* writers give us an account of a divine membra, or Logos, or word, which is of the very essence of God, and is represented as a power of the divine nature, and they speak also of another Logos or Word, which is the first-born of all creatures, a glorious super-angelic spirit; there appear also plain traces, and evident footsteps of the same divine and inferior Logos among the primitive christian writers. Now these ancient intimations and notices of a twofold Logos in human writings, under the sacred and superior conduct of the old and new testament, lead us to suppose, that our blessed Saviour, who is the true Logos, or Word of God, had a double nature before his incarnation, and that his human soul had a real existence as the Son of God, and a personal union to deity before the foundation of the world.

From this representation of things there are these two very considerable advantages derived.

I. Hereby both the divine and the human natures of *Christ* receive more honour, and more exalted dignity, than the common representation of this matter will allow.

If the Logos, in it's divine sense, signify an essential power of the deity, then this divine Logos has proper supreme godhead, and, shall I say, shares with the Father even in self-existence and independency, for the Logos belongs to the very nature of God; and yet it is sometimes represented in a distinct, personal manner, for wise purposes, in the holy scriptures; for it has a sufficient distinction from the Father to lay a just foundation for such a figurative personality. Whereas, in the common and current exposition of these ancient writers, as well as of scripture, there are too many secondary and inferior characters ascribed to the Logos in it's divinest sense, or to the divine nature of *Christ*. In the language of the primitive christians, and in the avowed declarations of the *athanasian* writers, he is denied the dignity of self-existence and independency, and is declared to derive both his real existence and his godhead, his power, and all his glory from the Father, and that, as the ancients assert, by the Father's will too, though this will is sometimes construed into a mere acquiescence. Now these derivative characters or properties seem a little to diminish the lustre, and degrade the supreme dignity of the godhead of *Christ*.

The human nature of *Christ* also in this my explication is most gloriously exalted far above all the ideas of such a common human soul, which according to the usual hypothesis, began it's existence when the child *Jesus* was conceived or born: Whereas in the scheme which I propose, the human soul of *Christ* is a sublime spirit\*, superior to all angels and every created being, the first-born of every creature, and possessed of such capacious powers as, by virtue of the indwelling godhead, perhaps might be some way employed in the great and wondrous transactions of creation and providence in past ages.

Now let it be considered to what a superior height this doctrine advances the whole person of *Christ*, God and man. Nor let those who love the Lord *Jesus* in sincerity be afraid to hear of his various glories.

2. Another

\* How this sublime and singular character is every way consistent with the idea of a true human soul, I have shewn in a "treatise on the glory of *Christ* as God man," which may possibly appear in the world hereafter. This treatise was published in 1746. See also page 587.

II. Another considerable advantage that arises from this exposition of the *jews* and the christian fathers into the sense of a complex Logos, is this, that it lays a foundation for reconciling those great and bitter contentions that have troubled the church in almost all ages from the beginning of christianity. Surely we should think it a mighty happiness, if there were any possibility of uniting the contending parties into one scheme of trinitarian doctrine, agreeable to the representations of scripture: And I know no hypothesis bids so fair for it as this, if the spirit of candour, and unprejudiced sincerity, the spirit of love and zeal, and unity, be given down from on high, to influence us all in our sacred studies on this subject.

In this scheme the *athanasians*, and all the orthodox trinitarians, find that sacred doctrine, for which they so justly, and zealously contend, viz. the true and proper deity of *Jesus Christ* personally united to an inferior nature, even of the soul and body of the man *Jesus*. The *sabellians*, and all unitarians, may find here the unity of the divine nature not divided into three conscious minds, or three infinite spirits, but diversified, or distinguished, into God the Father, with his two distinct, essential powers, the Word, and the Spirit. Here the *arians* and *semiarians* may read all the exalted properties of their Logos, that is, the pre-existent soul of our Saviour, for which they shew so warm and constant a zeal in all their writings, and may be conducted onward to his indwelling godhead.

I confess, the two more eminent contesting parties in this very question, about the sense of the ancients, are the *arians*, or *semiarians*, and the *athanasians*: And while one of them imagines the fathers, in all their expressions, intend a Logos inferior to godhead, and the other supposes them to describe and represent him as true and eternal God, it is my opinion, that all the expressions of the ancients can scarce ever be reconciled fairly and entirely to either of these extremes. But a supposition, that God and a creature united before the foundations of the world, may compose this glorious person, this Logos, leads the way to allow both of these parties, to be in a great measure in the right with regard to the fathers, and happily to reconcile them in one sentiment and opinion, without the least derogation from the supreme deity of *Christ*, as revealed in the holy scriptures.

If I might venture into a comparison on this occasion, I would liken the writings of the ancients concerning the Logos to a mine of rich metal, where two travellers taking up the oar, find some brighter, and some baser properties in the mass. One of them asserts, that the metal is all silver, and he gives the most favourable and exalted turn that he can to the coarser phenomena of lead, which discover themselves there. The other sinks and beclouds the brighter phenomena of silver, till he has construed the whole mine into lead. Here it is possible that a less knowing traveller may come by and happen to make such an experiment on the mingled mass, as discovers that there is both silver and lead united in the same oar; by this means the different properties appear to belong to the different metals, and the contenders are reconciled.

Thus I have gathered what light and assistance I could out of ancient *jewish* and christian writings, to explain and confirm that doctrine concerning the Logos, or Word, which seems to be revealed and contained in the holy scripture: And I hope I have said nothing inconsistent with the divine grandeur or godhead of our blessed Saviour, nor with any necessary articles of faith. I am sensible the performance must, on many accounts, be very defective. But if I have been so happy, as to have given any hints, whereby persons of greater learning, health and sagacity, may be encouraged to pursue, to establish, or correct the hypothesis which I have proposed, and to introduce clearer ideas into divine things, by a further explication of this great mystery of godliness, I shall have cause to rejoice, and give thanks to God.



If I have asserted any peculiar opinions with too positive an air, and used the language of unbecoming assurance in doubtful matters, in the course of this dissertation, I here disclaim and retract it. I am but a searcher into the deep things of the gospel, and endeavour, according to my slender measure, to trace out the unsearchable riches and glories of the person of my redeemer, God and man. Now, upon the best survey I can take, both of the revelation of scripture, and the expressions of ancient writers, I am inclined to believe, that his human soul was formed, and united to his divine nature before the foundation of the world: And as both parts of the constitution of his person are called the Logos, or Word, so the whole complex person is manifested under the same name. I adore the Word dwelling in flesh. I trust in him for eternal life, and call him, as *Thomas* did, *John* xx. 28. "my Lord and my God." To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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## DISSERTATION V.

### Of the HOLY SPIRIT.

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#### SECTION I.

*The general ideas of the Word and Spirit.*

**T**HE great and blessed God, considered in his own nature, is far superior to all our thoughts, and exalted high above our most raised apprehensions. It is utterly impossible for a creature to search out the almighty Creator to perfection. When we shall be admitted to heaven, and behold him in the light of glory, we shall then see him as he is in himself; but even then, and for ever, our knowledge of him will be imperfect, for we are creatures and not God, and our understandings will never be infinite.

In this world we must be content to know him as he has revealed himself in the light of grace, and discovered himself in his word: And because we are not capable of taking in heavenly ideas in their own sublimest nature, God has been pleased to teach us the heavenly things that relate to himself, in earthly language; and by way of analogy to creatures, he has let us know something what God is.

Among all the creatures that come within the reach of our common and obvious cognifance, human nature is the most perfect, and therefore it has pleased the great and glorious God, by resemblances drawn from ourselves, to accommodate the descriptions of himself to our capacities. When he speaks of his own nature in the language of men, he often uses the names of human parts, and members, and faculties, to represent his own properties and actions, thereby that he may bring them within the notice of the lowest capacity, and the meanest understanding among the children of men. Therefore he speaks of his face, to signify the discoveries of himself; his eyes, to describe his knowledge; his heart, to describe his thoughts; his hand

hand and arm, to signify his power and activity; and his mouth, to denote his resolutions, or revelations.

But since in the composition of human nature there are two distinct parts, a soul and a body, and the soul is much the nobler and more exalted principle, it has also pleased God to rise above corporeal images, and to describe himself, his attributes, properties, powers, and operations, by way of analogy to a human soul. We know by our own consciousness, or by an inward inspection into ourselves, that our soul, or spirit, is a being which has understanding and will, thoughts, inclinations, knowledge, desires, and various powers to move the body: Therefore our Saviour has told us, God is a spirit, and the brightest and sublimest representations of God in scripture, are such as bear an analogy and resemblance to the soul of man, or a spiritual, thinking nature.

As the chief faculties of our souls are the mind and will, or rather a power of knowing, and a power of acting, so God seems to have revealed himself to us as indued with two divine faculties, his Word or Wisdom, and his Spirit, or efficient power. It is by this word, and this spirit, that he is represented in scripture as managing the great concerns of the creation, providence, redemption, and salvation: And these three, viz. God the Father, his Word, and his Spirit, are held forth to us in scripture as one God, even as the soul of man, his mind, and his will, are one spiritual being.

Now though the soul be the nobler part in man, though the brightest, the fairest, and most correspondent resemblances of God, are borrowed from the soul, yet when we consider the terms which are used to express the sacred trinity, as well as the divine essence, we find them borrowed from the body, as well as from the soul of man; and probably this was done also, that the lowest capacities among men might attain some idea of them.

The first person in the trinity is called the Father, which is a name given him as he is the first origin, spring, and creator of all things, as he is the former of the human soul and body of our Lord *Jesus Christ* his Son, and as he is represented as the prime agent, employing his Word, and his Spirit, in the great affairs of creation, providence, redemption and salvation. Now this term Father is evidently derived from some resemblance which he bears to human nature, or mankind, in the body, as much as in the soul.

If we consider the second person of the trinity under the character of the Son, this is apparently borrowed from mankind in the same manner.

The term *Logos*, which denotes the second person in the trinity, abstracted from flesh and blood, signifies both reason and word: And therefore we may suppose the sacred analogy borrowed both from the body, and from the soul of man. It is borrowed from the soul of man, as *Logos* signifies reason; from the body of man, as it signifies a word; or from body and soul together, as it signifies an external word, or speech, manifesting internal wisdom or reason.

In the same manner the term Spirit, which denotes the third of the sacred three, does both in *latin*, *greek*, and *hebrew*, signify the breath; it signifies also vital activity\*, and it signifies an intelligent principle. And therefore we may suppose the sacred analogy, and use of this word, to be derived both from the body and the soul of man. It is derived from the soul, as it signifies an intelligent principle of action; it

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\* The term spirit, in other languages, as well as in *english*, signifies power, vigour and vital activity. It is so taken in several places of scripture: I need cite no more than, *John* vi. 63. "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."



it is derived from the body, as it signifies breath. And perhaps it is derived from the body and soul united, as it signifies vital activity and efficiency, though in this sense it seems to be chiefly borrowed from the soul.

There are several places in scripture where the Spirit of God seems to bear an analogy to breath, and to signify the breath of God; as *Psal.* xxxiii. 6. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." Here the term רוח, that is, breath, or spirit, is either a synonymous term for word, in the first part of the verse, which is formed by the breath; or it signifies the Spirit of God, as a divine power, by way of analogy to human breath. So *Psal.* civ. 30. "Thou takest away their breath, and the creatures die: Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, and they are created," that is, thou sendest forth the breath of life by the agency of thy Spirit. So *Job* xxxiv. 14. "If he gather his spirit and his breath, all flesh shall perish together," that is, If he withhold his vital influence, which gives breath to all animals. *Job* xxxiii. 4. "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the almighty hath given me life." And, *Mal.* ii. 15. where the prophet argues, that God made but one woman for one man, yet he had the residue of the spirit, that is, more vital influence to create more women if he had pleased. These two last texts may refer either to the animal life of man, which is maintained by breath; or to the rational soul, which in the *jewish* philosophy was the vital principle of the animal, both which seem to be included in that metaphorical language in *Gen.* ii. 7. "The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."

Thus it appears, that as outward speech, and breath, are powers of the human body, as reason and vital activity, or efficiency, are powers of the human soul, so the great God, in scripture, has revealed himself to us as a glorious being, who has two eternal, essential, divine powers, which in condescension to our weakness he is pleased to describe by way of analogy to our souls and bodies; and this he doth by the terms דבר and רוח in *hebrew*, Λόγος and Πνεῦμα in *greek*, and in *english*, word and spirit, or speech and breath, or reason and vital activity, or efficiency.

Though I call the word and the spirit two divine powers, to comport with the analogy which scripture seems to have established between the idea of God, and the idea of man, yet I am far from determining precisely, what, or how great, is that real and divine difference which is between them, or what is the true and inward distinction between the essence of God himself, who is called the Father, and his Word, and his Spirit. It is represented in scripture to be something more than such a difference as is between divine attributes, or nominal relations, and yet it seems to be something less than is between three distinct conscious minds, or three different intelligent agents, in the literal sense of the word. Perhaps in godhead the difference between the several powers, or principles of action, may be much greater than they are in a human, or created spirit. It is most likely there is no human idea that exactly answers it. This is a problem too high, and too hard for us to resolve, who know heavenly things only by way of distant analogy to things earthly, and have not yet learned the unspeakable words which St. Paul heard in paradise. This we know, that these two, viz. the Word and Spirit, are often in scripture, as well as by the ancient *jews* and first christians, represented as divine powers; yet they are also by the sacred writers, by *jews* and christians, sometimes represented in a personal character, or in the way and manner of distinct personal agents. How this is to be accounted for, I have shewn in the sequel of this, as well as in other dissertations.

## SECTION

## SECTION II.

*The particular representations of the holy Spirit in scripture.*

HAVING spoken in the former discourse particularly of the Logos, or Word of God, in it's several senses, as it relates to *Jesus Christ*, or the second person in the trinity, I apply myself now more directly to say a few things concerning the third person, or the blessed Spirit, so far as I can derive light from the holy scriptures. Now if we consult them, I humbly conceive we shall find these following discoveries.

I. The Spirit of God is represented as a principle of divine operation, as the active power, or faculty of effience belonging to the divine nature, in several places in scripture\*. It is exhibited to us as something in, and of God, which seems to be expressed and explained by power, virtue, and a principle of efficiency, or as a divine power belonging to godhead, together with the influence of it. See *Luke i. 35.* "The holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee," which two expressions seem to be parallel and explicative of each other; for our Saviour is called the Son of God, in that text, for this reason, because the Father "prepared a body for him," as *Heb. x. 5.* Or the power of God formed him in the womb in a transcendent manner above other children, without any earthly father.

*John iii. 34.* *Christ* had the "Spirit of God given him without measure," which is explained, *Acts x. 38.* "*Jesus of Nazareth* was anointed with the holy Ghost, and with power," that is, the Spirit of God dwelt in him with it's powerful influences, and was represented as descending upon him at his baptism.

It was by this Spirit that he wrought miracles, and cast out devils, *Matth. xii. 28.* And yet when *Christ* taught the people, and diseased persons were brought to him, it is said, *Luke v. 17.* "The power of the Lord was present to heal them."

The apostles were ordered to "wait at *Jerusalem* for the promise of the Spirit," *Acts i. 4.* and *ii. 33.* that is, the holy Spirit, which was promised to them, and this in *Luke xxiv. 49.* is called "their being endued with power from on high." The word is *δυναμις* in the original, which properly signifieth force, not authority.

When *St. Paul* preached to the *corinthians*, *1 Cor. ii. 4.* he confirmed his doctrine by the demonstration of the Spirit and power, that is, the Spirit of God, or divine power, concurring with him to work miracles for the proof of his gospel.

When it is said, *Psal. xxxiii. 6.* "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath, or Spirit, of his mouth." This seems to be a parallel text to those other scriptures where God is described as creating, or establishing the earth, or the heavens, by his wisdom, and by his power, that is, by his Word and Spirit, the two sacred persons being represented as divine powers, or principles of operation.

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\* Let it be noted here, that the word power is an ambiguous term both in the *english*, and in the learned languages; sometimes it signifies a faculty or principle of operation, and sometimes it denotes the force and influence of that faculty. Now the word being so often used, and these two senses of it being somewhat akin, it is hardly possible to limit the precise bounds of each of these senses or ideas in every place of scripture. My chief design therefore, in these citations, is to shew, that the idea of a certain divine power, or faculty, with it's force of operation, runs through them all.



When the creatures languish and die, *Psal.* civ. 30. "He sends his Spirit and they are created." *Job* xxxvi. 13. "By his Spirit he garnished the heavens; and the Spirit of God made man," *Job* xxxiii. 4. which works are frequently ascribed to the power, or effieience of God.

*Zech.* iv. 6. God will accomplish his work, "not by might, nor by power, that is, neither by armies, nor the power of men, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts:" The Spirit, or power of God, stands in opposition to the power of men.

*Christ* is said to be raised from the dead by the power of God, *Eph.* i. 19. and *2 Cor.* xiii. 4. yet his resurrection is attributed to the Spirit, *1 Pet.* iii. 18. "Quickened by the Spirit." So our resurrection is ascribed to the power of God, *1 Cor.* vi. 14. which is attributed to the Spirit, *Rom.* viii. 11.

In the phraseology of scripture the hand of the Lord, the finger of God, the arm of the Lord, are various expressions to represent the divine principle of effieience, and especially in miraculous operations. Now there are several places wherein these are used to represent the Spirit of the Lord, and the same effects are attributed to the blessed Spirit, which shew that a principle of divine power, or efficacy, is the thing meant by the term Spirit.

In the old testament, the influence of this divine power was exerted on *Bezaleel* and *Aboliab*: They were filled with the Spirit of God; the divine power influenced them to devise curious works, to work in silver and gold, &c. for the tabernacle, *Exod.* xxxi. 2, 3, 6. and xxxv. 31, &c. So the Spirit of the Lord began to move *Sampson* at times in the camp of *Dan*, to perform works of strength or courage, *Judg.* xiii. 25. that is, the divine principle of effieience wrought in him, or on him, for these purposes. So the Spirit of the Lord came upon *Ezekiel* and lifted him up, which is called the hand of the Lord in several other places. See *Ezek.* i. 3. and iii. 12, 14, 22. and viii. 1, 3. where these words seem to be used promiscuously.

In the language of the apostles, the conversion of sinners, the assistance of ministers, the support of the afflicted, the preservation of the saints, &c. are sometimes expressly attributed to the power of God, which yet are the peculiar offices, or works of the blessed Spirit, and in other parts of the sacred writings are attributed to him.

I do not explain the term Spirit, as I said before, to signify that attribute of God called power, or omnipotence, but rather, something in the divine nature which we may conceive of after the manner of men, by way of a power or faculty, represented in the various exercises or influences thereof towards creatures, and that frequently for their instruction, sanctification, comfort or assistance, in any peculiar services, or miraculous operations. This seems to be the most common sense of it in the new testament, and often in the old. Upon this account it is called "the Spirit of knowledge," *Isai.* xi. 2. "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding," *Ephes.* i. 17. "the Spirit of holiness," *Rom.* i. 4. "and the Spirit of grace and supplication," *Zech.* xii. 10. with regard to it's various effects.

And herein appears a very plain difference between the *socinian* doctrine, and the scheme which I here propose; *Socinus*, *Schlictingius*, *Crellius*, and others of them, make the Spirit of God to signify the mere efficacy, or influence of God's power on creatures: And therefore they roundly and unanimously deny the holy Spirit to be the true God. But as *Bisterfeld* justly distinguishes in answer to *Crellius*, "the Spirit of God is indeed the power of God, *virtus Dei*, yet not that accidental power, which is the mere influence, or effect, of divine agency upon the creatures, but that essential, or substantial power, which is called a person in the divine nature." And though

it is hard to determine in every single text, whether the Spirit of God, mean the divine agent himself, or his influences, yet there are several scriptures wherein it implies true and proper godhead, or a principle of action in the divine nature, and not merely the influence of that principle, or the effects of that power, as will plainly appear in the following parts of the discourse.

Now it is no wonder that the name of Spirit of God, in the scriptural writings, should be given to a power of the true God, or sometimes to the influence of a divine power, since this name was used even by heathens in those eastern nations, in the same sense, concerning their false gods. *Nebuchadnezzar* the king of *Assyria*, and the king *Belshazzar* his son, and several of their courtiers, use this same expression, and say concerning *Daniel*, that the spirit of the holy gods is in him. See *Dan.* iv. 8, 9, 18. and *Dan.* v. 11, 14. *Pharaoh*, king of *Egypt*, uses the same language, *Gen.* xl. 38. "Can we find such a man as *Joseph*, in whom is the spirit of the gods." *Elohim*, that is, they supposed the powers of the gods dwelt in *Joseph* and *Daniel*, and instructed them in the knowledge of secrets. And if we had greater acquaintance with the ancient and oriental ways of speaking, it is very probable we should find, that when God spoke to his people the *jews*, he used the same sort of language that was customary in those nations.

And if we consider the common phraseology of scripture, which speaks of God acting by his Word and Spirit, in a way of analogy to man acting by his natural powers of mind, will, conscience, his breath, his hand, his face, his eye, &c. far the greatest part of texts where the Spirit of God is mentioned, are most naturally explained, by supposing it a power of his nature.

What objections may be raised against this first head, shall be considered afterward.

II. Though the Spirit of God be represented sometimes as a power, or principle of action in the divine nature, yet in several places in scripture it is set forth in a personal character, or under the idea of a person, distinct both from God the Father, and his Son *Jesus Christ*. The Spirit is spoken of in such a way as persons are represented in human language: I need not cite many scriptures to prove this, see *John* xv. 26. "But when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." *John* xvi. 13, 14. "When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak, and he shall shew you things to come: He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you." And several other passages there are in the word of God which represent the holy Spirit in a personal manner.

But it is not very hard to account for this personal representation of a power of the divine nature, when we consider,

1. That we know not how great is the distinction between different powers, or principles of agency, in so sublime and incomprehensible a nature as the godhead. "God is great, and we know him not," *Job* xxxvi. 26.

2. The powers of man, viz. his mind, his will, his reason, his fancy, his conscience, are often represented as persons, in modern nations and languages; the man himself is sometimes described as conversing with his own spirit, with his soul, with his conscience, with his fancy, or reason, as though they were persons; and employing his reason or conscience, as agents, in any operation, even as God is said to send, or employ his own Spirit in his sacred affairs, as a divine agent.

Besides,



Besides, we may consider, that this personal manner of speaking was very customary among the eastern nations, and the sacred writers. They frequently personify not only the powers of human nature, but the virtues, vices, dispositions of men; and even things without life are often called sons and daughters, and exhibited to the reader, as though they were persons. But of this subject I have treated more at large in the dissertation on the word person\*, and would not repeat it here. See also some further solution of this difficulty under the answer to the first objection.

III. The Spirit of God is represented as so intimate with the divine nature, and so much one with God, that it is sometimes exhibited as God himself, even as the spirit of a man is properly the man himself, or his soul. It was common with *hebrew*, *jewish* writers, to speak of the spirit of a thing to signify the thing itself. See, *Eph.* iv. 23. "Be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind," that is, let your mind itself be renewed: Where we may suppose the same sort of *pleonasm*, as when the body, or flesh of *Christ*, is called the body of his flesh, *Col.* i. 22. So the Spirit of God is represented to us as one and the same with God, by analogy to human spirits. *1 Cor.* ii. 10, 11. "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God; for what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God;" that is, as the spirit of a man knows the secret things of his own soul by a primary and immediate consciousness, inherent in himself, and not derived from any other, so the Spirit of God is as much that God whose Spirit he is, as the spirit of a man is the man himself; and therefore he knows the secrets of the godhead by a primary and immediate consciousness inherent in himself, and not derived from another.

There are other scriptures wherein the Spirit may be taken for God himself; as *Isa.* lxiii. 10. "They rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit, therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them." God himself seems to be the proper object of their rebellion and provocation. So when *David* says, *2 Sam.* xxiii, 2, 3. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, the God of *Israel* said, he that ruleth over men must be just."

That which is done by this Spirit is done by God himself; and that which is done to this Spirit is represented as done to God himself.

When in *Acts* xiii. 2. "The holy Ghost said, separate unto me *Paul* and *Barnabas* for the work whereunto I have called them," it is very naturally interpreted as the voice of God by his Spirit, for it was God that called them to the ministry, and to him they were separated.

When *Ananias*, *Acts* v. 3. told a lie to the holy Ghost, *St. Peter* says, verse 4. "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God," that is, to God dwelling in the apostles by his Spirit.

So *Isa.* xl. 13. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor, hath taught him;" The Spirit of the Lord here seems to be put for God himself, as the spirit of a man in the same sort of sentence would be naturally construed the man himself, or his soul.

*Psal.* cxxxix. 7. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or, whither shall I flee from thy presence?" The plain meaning is, whither shall I go where the knowledge and power of God cannot reach me? The Spirit of God is not a distinct being from God himself, or another conscious mind.

It is the Spirit of God, and it is God himself, who inspired the prophets, *2 Pet.* i. 21. *2 Tim.* iii. 16. *Heb.* i. 1. It is the Spirit of God which dwells in his saints,

\* See dissertation VI.

as in a temple, for they are called the temple of God, 2 Cor. vi. 16. compared with 1 Cor. vi. 19.

It is the Spirit of God that sanctifies his people, that gives light and comfort, and hope to them, all which are attributed to God himself, and that not as acting by an under-agent, or an inferior nature, but by some intimate and essential power of his own. And were it not for some personal characters which are sometimes attributed to the blessed Spirit, by a figurative, and eastern manner of speech, I am persuaded scarce any reader of the bible would ever have imagined, that the Spirit of God signified any thing else but a power of the divine nature, the influence of that power, or God himself acting by that power. The proof of the deity of the holy Spirit is more particularly insisted on in "the christian doctrine of the trinity," propositions viii. ix. \*

To confirm this head, viz. that the Spirit of God, in some places, may signify God himself, let it be observed, that the soul of God in several scriptures signifieth God himself. *Isa. i. 14.* "Your new moons my soul hateth." *Isa. xlii. 1.* "My elect, in whom my soul delighteth." *Heb. x. 38.* "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." And this is a very common way of speaking among the *hebrews*, for the soul of a man signifies the man himself, as well as the spirit of a man does.

In confirmation of the same position let it be observed also, that as the term Logos, Word, or the second of the sacred three, is sometimes used to include the whole divine nature, though it more directly and frequently is explained by wisdom, so the term spirit, though it more naturally and frequently signifies a divine principle of efficiency, yet it may be used sometimes in a more extensive sense for the divine nature itself, as I have mentioned in the vii. "dissertation on the distinction of persons in the godhead."

IV. As the Spirit of God, in some scriptures, signifies a divine power, or principle of efficiency in the godhead, and is called the third person in the trinity, so in other texts the term Spirit denotes the influence, or operation of this power, together with the various effects of it communicated to men, which are usually called the gifts and graces of the holy Spirit. Nor is it strange at all that this term should be thus used; for as the Word of God, in several places of scripture, does plainly signify the second person in the blessed trinity, who hath been employed through all ages to reveal the mind and will of God to men, so there are many other places wherein the word of God signifies the revelation itself, or the effect of the agency of this divine Word: And it is much more frequently used to signify either the scripture, or some revelation of God to men, than to denote the second person in the trinity.

Perhaps it is in this sense of influence and gifts, that we may best interpret some of those expressions, both in the old testament and the new, where the Spirit is said to "be given to men, to be poured out upon men, to be shed down on the apostles, to be given by the laying on of hands, to have the spirit in greater or less degrees, to be full of the holy Ghost, or filled with the Spirit, and anointed with the Spirit." It is true, that such sort of expressions may be much better applied to a certain power of the divine nature, in it's various agencies, than to a real proper person, or distinct conscious mind; and this is one reason that inclines me to think, that the holy Spirit is not another conscious mind, or a distinct person, in the full, proper, and human sense of the word. But still if some of these scriptural phrases be explained concerning the gifts and graces of the holy Spirit, as the effects of the operation of that divine power, it may render the scriptural language a little more plain, easy and intelligible, in those places.

\* See pages 442—446, 451—453. in this volume.



Note, there are some texts which mention the Word of God, wherein it is pretty hard to say, whether the person of *Christ*, or his revelation of divine things be meant, as, *John* x. 35. "He called them gods, to whom the word of God came." *Heb.* xiii. 7. "Those who have spoken to you the word of God:" And in the next verse, "*Jesus Christ*, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." *Rev.* i. 2. "*John*, who bare record of the word of God:" Which is the remarkable character of this apostle, because he spake much of the Logos, or of *Christ* under the title of the Word. And in like manner there may be some particular texts wherein it is difficult to determine whether the Spirit of God signify the very power of the divine nature itself, or whether it signify the effect of that power. I will mention but one, which is agreed to be dubious. *Acts* xix. 2. "We have not so much as heard whether there be any holy Ghost." Some interpret the holy Ghost here to signify his nature and existence, and some make it only to denote the effusion of his gifts, graces, or influences. But I do not think that this difficulty is of any very great importance, while it is agreed that these various gifts, graces, and blessings, conferred upon men, are all entirely attributed to the Spirit of God, or to a certain divine executive power, or principle of efficiency belonging to the divine nature.

Thus I have represented the clearest and best ideas I have yet attained, concerning the Spirit of God, who is generally called the third person in the sacred trinity. As *Christ*, in his divine nature, is represented as the eternal word, or wisdom of the Father, which, perhaps, may include in it the power of knowledge, or knowledge and volition; so the Spirit seems to be another divine power, which may be called the power of efficiency: And though it is sometimes described in scripture as a personal agent, after the manner of *jewish* and eastern writers, yet if we put all the scriptures relating to this subject together, and view them in a correspondent light, the Spirit of God does not seem to be described as a distinct spirit from the Father, or as another conscious mind, but as an eternal essential power, belonging to the Father, whereby all things are effected: And thus the supreme godhead of the blessed Spirit is maintained in it's glory.

It is proper here to take notice, that what I have said elsewhere of the Logos, or divine Word, may be also applied to the blessed Spirit, viz. That sometimes it carries with it an inadequate idea of godhead, when it signifies a power in the divine nature; and sometimes an adequate idea, when it intends God himself exerting that power. And this is no strange and unnatural supposition, since the same sort of phraseology, is in frequent use when we speak of the soul of man, and it's various powers; for sometimes by the words reason, will, conscience, &c. we mean those particular powers of the soul, which are inadequate ideas of the soul; at other times we mean the soul itself acting by one or another of those powers, and then the idea is full and adequate. And it is my opinion, that there can scarce be any cavils framed against these representations of the Spirit of God in scripture, but what may be also raised against many of our human forms of speaking, concerning the spirit of a man, or some of his intellectual and active powers.

## SECTION III.

*An occasional reflexion on the glory of the holy Spirit.*

**A**S this explication of the doctrine of the blessed Spirit, seems to give a more easy and natural interpretation to most of the scriptures where he is mentioned, so it tends to aggrandize the character of God, and of his divine Spirit, and exalt him infinitely above all created powers. Perhaps, no creature has any real proper efficiency belonging to it, when abstracted from that universal influence of God, which is commonly called the divine concurrence, whereby all beings are preserved and kept in actuation, according to their several natures, that is, according to the laws appointed by the Creator. And if so, then the divine Spirit may be the proper universal efficient of all created being, and of all motion whatsoever. Let us enquire into this sentiment a little further.

When one body is moved by another moving body which impels it, I think it is agreed by the latest and best philosophers, such as Mr. *Locke* and Sir *Isaac Newton*, that this is not owing to any innate power in the impelling body, but that it is effected according to a law of motion, which the sovereign will of the Creator has appointed; so that the second body is not so properly moved by the first, as by the universal and all-pervading force of that original divine efficacious volition, that one body should thus give place, when another of sufficient bulk and motion impels it.

This is yet more evident in the great law of attraction, or gravitation, which Sir *Isaac Newton*, has found to be observed in the corporeal world. He acknowledges that there can no mechanical reason be given, why all bodies should gravitate toward a center, or why all the parts of matter should have a mutual tendency toward each other; but it is the Creator's original, and everlasting power and will, acting uniformly on all the parts of matter.

It is also this original will and power of the Creator, that gave a projectile motion to the several planetary bodies, and that this projectile motion concurring with, or rather resisting the gravitation toward their several centers, keeps the whole system of planets in their proper order and periodical revolutions.

And this is not only applicable to one body moving another; but when a spirit wills to move a body, it has no innate efficient power of it's own to put the least atom in motion. A spirit can neither touch, nor be touched. The strongest and wisest man upon earth cannot move a grain of sand or feather, by a mere act of his will; yet he can move the whole animal body to which he is particularly united, by an act of his will. The true meaning of it is this, that God has appointed that whenever the human soul puts forth a volition, the limbs and muscles of that particular animal body shall be effectually moved. This motion is really and originally owing to the divine original volition, and his universal efficient power. *Εὐχαριστοῦμεν, καὶ κινούμεθα, καὶ ὡς αὐτὸν, Αἱς xvi. 28.* "In or by him we live, and are moved, and have our being."

Thus all the motion that is found in our material world is the proper effect of the prime divine volition and executive power, which continues through all ages, and pervades all worlds; which acts according to it's own, supreme appointed laws, and is the real but universal cause of all the motions of every atom in the universe: And



though the particular motions are attributed sometimes to bodies, by way of attraction or impulsion, and sometimes to minds, or spirits, as the effects of their volition, yet it is really owing to the infinite and all-pervading efficiency of the great God that formed at first, and still preserves and actuates the whole material system of beings, in one uniform and unchanging manner of operation. What a glorious and magnificent idea does this give us of the blessed Spirit, the executive power of God; Well may it be said, *Gen. i. 2.* "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," or the watry chaos; that is, put the parts of it into their several proper motions, towards the formation of a beautiful world. And when creatures die, "God sends forth his Spirit and they are created again," and the face of the animal and vegetable world is renewed by the agency of this Spirit, *Psal. civ. 30.*

And how happily does this scheme correspond with the doctrine of miracles, which when they were wrought by our blessed Saviour, or by his apostles, are still attributed to the Spirit of God. As it is he who manages all nature by settled rules of his own, or of the divine Logos, or wisdom, so it is he who unsettles the course of nature, and changes it when he pleases. It is he interposes with his immediate and miraculous influence, to act upon the various parts of matter, and give them motions, or appearances, contrary to his own established rules. He can bid the sun stand still, the shadow go backward, and command the waters of *Jordan* to run towards their spring. He causes the blind to see, he unstops the ear of the deaf, and puts vital motion into the dead.

When the divine Logos, or Word, performs a miracle, it is by the efficient force of this divine power, the Spirit of God, who is naturally and inseparably joined to the Word. When *Christ Jesus* wrought miracles on earth, he did it by virtue of godhead dwelling in him personally, in the character of the Logos, or Word, inseparably united to, and one with, the blessed Spirit: Though for special reasons in the divine oeconomy, these miracles are rather ascribed to the holy Spirit than to the divine Logos, or Word. And when he condescends to make any of the children of men, conscious instruments of these miraculous performances, all that they can do is to lift up a prayer, and put forth a humble volition that such a supernatural effect may appear; but it is really by the agency of the blessed Spirit, that the laws of nature are counteracted: Nature herself obeys none but her sovereign, the miracle appears in it's divine glory, and confesses the presence of a divine power.

Thus, by the concurrent demonstration of the Spirit of God, and of power, *St. Paul* preached the gospel among the heathen nations: The Spirit, as a divine efficient, impressed on his brain, and on his tongue, a train of languages which he understood not before, for he spake with a multitude of tongues; and the same blessed Spirit, as a divine efficient power, dictated to the apostle how to preach, and when to attempt a miraculous operation; and this glorious almighty agent produced the marvellous effect, surprized and amazed their eyes and their ears with sensible wonders, and enlightened and converted the souls of the blind heathens. He bid nature yield to miracle; he made heathenism in the heart give place to christianity, and turned sinners into saints. Thus the Spirit of God is the universal efficient of all the common events in the course of nature, and of all supernatural appearances, whether in the kingdom of nature, or of grace.

It is possible that some weak and unskilful reader may be ready to scruple this representation, as though it attributed all the visible actions of men, whether

good

good or bad, to the Spirit of God, and thus tended to represent God as the author of sin.

But those who understand the doctrine of the divine concurrence to the works of inanimate nature, as well as to the actions of men, know, that there is a great deal of difference between the uniform universal agency and influence of a prime cause, according to his own original established laws of nature, and the particular agency of created intelligent causes. The particular actions of intelligent creatures may be very culpable, for abusing the general influence of the first cause to vicious purposes, while the prime, uniform, universal cause is blameless. The Spirit of God, though it be the universal efficient of all life and motion, yet is by no means chargeable with the guilt of a murderer, even though he gives vital motion and power to those limbs which perform a bloody action, for he does not incline the will of men to any iniquity, nor are their limbs moved but by the original force of his law of creation, according to their own free will, and their own resolution.

It is granted by modern philosophers that the divine will, or power, is the immediate cause of gravitation; and it is evident, that if a man push a boy from a precipice, it is gravitation that dashes out his brains; yet the man is properly guilty of the boy's death, and not the divine power, which is an universal and uniform agent, according to the settled laws of the creation.

I thought it necessary for the sake of weaker readers, to remove this cavil by the way. But these last pages are rather an occasional digression, and a meditation "en passant." Whether this be approved or no, it does not at all affect my present hypothesis, of explaining the sacred three. It is time now to endeavour to solve some of the special difficulties relating to the doctrine of the trinity, that are supposed to attend on this representation of the blessed Spirit.

#### S E C T I O N IV.

##### Objections answered.

Objection I. **I**S not the personal language, in which the Spirit of God is represented in scripture, too strong and emphatical, to be applied merely to a divine power? Is he not described as a real proper person, an intelligent being, distinct from God the Father and the Son?

Answer I. I grant the personal representations of the holy Spirit seem to be strong in some places of scripture: But let it be noted, that the more general and constant language speaks of him as a power, or a medium of divine operation, in the very essence of God.

We must also consider that it was the frequent custom amongst the *jewish* writers, and the oriental nations, not only in their oratorical or poetical works, but even in their common phraseology, to speak of powers and qualities, under personal characters. Now it is no wonder at all that the blessed Spirit of God should be so represented, especially since we know not how great the real and divine distinction may be between God and his essential powers. This may be so great, for ought we know, as to lay a juster foundation for the ascription of personal characters to the blessed Spirit, than can be found amongst any human powers or properties whatsoever:

Is not the wisdom of man, as well as the wisdom of God represented in strong personal characters in the book of *Proverbs*? See *Prov.* i. 20—33. "Wisdom crieth without:



without, she uttereth her voice in the streets, &c." *Prov.* ii. 10—12. iii. 13—20. iv. 6—13. ix. 1. as well as in the eighth chapter, where it is supposed the second person in the trinity is meant. Is not charity represented as a person, *1 Cor.* xiii? Is not the scripture itself represented in a personal manner, as a prophet having fore-knowledge and a power of speaking? *Gal.* iii. 8. "The scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached the gospel to *Abraham*." Is not the law described as a person? *Gal.* iii. 24. "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to *Christ*." And in several other places. Is not the grace of God exhibited as a person, labouring together with *St. Paul*? *1 Cor.* xv. 10. "I laboured more than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." And why may not the Spirit of God, or his efficient power, be so described too, since it has so great, so universal, and all-prevading an agency in the affairs of creation and salvation?

Are not the water and the blood described in a personal manner, as witnesses, "*οἱ μαρτυροῦντες*," *1 John* v. 8. Take these words in any sense; yet they are not real proper persons: Why then may not the Spirit be called a witness, and be represented personally too, whether in that verse it signifies a divine power, or the influence of that power?

Let it be observed, as I hinted before, that among men nothing is more naturally represented in a personal manner, than the several actions, qualities, or powers of human nature, viz. virtue, vice, wisdom, fancy, reason, conscience, will, &c. and this both in scripture, and in common writings. I will mention but one at present. The very approbation, and concurrent sentiments of *St. Paul* are called his spirit, and represented in a personal manner, *1 Cor.* v. 4. "When ye are gathered together, and my Spirit with you." *Col.* ii. 5. "Though I be absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order." Now if the very will, inclination, and concurrent sentiments of a man may be called the spirit of a man, and represented as being present, and acting in a distant place, is there not much more reason why a divine efficient power should be called the Spirit of God, and be represented as employed and acting in all distant places, by virtue of the divine omnipresence.

Answer II. I might give a second answer to this objection, in this manner. It is granted by all trinitarians, that there are some places of scripture where the Spirit must be construed as a power, or a divine influence, and must signify the gifts, graces, or operations of the Spirit, viz. Where the Spirit is represented as poured out, as shed down, as communicated in greater or less degrees, &c. Now since the Spirit, if he be a proper, real, literal person, yet is confessed to be sometimes represented as a power, why may he not be sometimes represented as a person; though in his own nature he be a proper, real, literal power? Things are represented in scripture as persons, more frequently than persons are represented as things.

Objection. But here it will be objected still, If the Spirit of God be but one power of the divine nature, how can it be described as vested with all manner of intelligent characters, powers, and properties, such as understanding, will, affections, &c? "The Spirit has knowledge, for he searches the deep things of God," *1 Cor.* ii. 10. "He has will, for he distributes gifts to every man severally as he will," *1 Cor.* xii. 11. "He has affections, for he is grieved," *Eph.* iv. 30. This seems to represent the Spirit as a complete person, and not as one power.

Answer I. To this I reply, first, I have already acknowledged that in some places of scripture the Spirit of God signifies God acting by his Spirit: So that the divine essence is included in the term, together with his almighty efficient power; and

and this gives a solution to that difficulty in several texts of scripture: God considered as acting by his Spirit, has also all other divine powers belonging to him.

Answer II. But, in the next place, I add also, that wheresoever things are represented in a personal manner, or as persons, there all personal or intelligent characters, viz. understanding, will, affections, &c. are ascribed to them. Even human wisdom as well as divine, in the book of *Proverbs*, has various intelligent and voluntary characters and actions ascribed unto it, when it is personalized. The same may be said of charity, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 4—8. It has knowledge and thoughts; “charity thinketh no evil, charity believeth all things. It has a will and design; charity seeketh not her own. It has affections; charity is kind, it rejoiceth not at iniquity, but it rejoiceth in the truth.” That this sort of language is common among the *jews*, may be seen abundantly in the apocryphal books of *Wisdom* and *Ecclesiasticus*, where all manner of powers, strength, knowledge, will, motion, &c. are ascribed to wisdom. Even inanimate things, when represented personally, have knowledge, will, and affections, ascribed to them. The sun is said to have knowledge, for he knoweth his going down, *Psal.* civ. 19. The sun has affections, for he rejoiceth to run his race, *Psal.* xix. 5. The wind itself, to which the holy Spirit is compared, *John* iii. 8. has a will ascribed to it. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, *ὅπου θέλει*, where it will.” By all these instances, and many others which might be added, it appears, that though the blessed Spirit may have both understanding and will, and affections, attributed to it in scripture language, it may still be one divine power, and not a proper literal person, or a distinct conscious mind.

But I have said many other things toward the solution of this difficulty in the discourse about the “use of the word person,” and in another that treats of the “distinctions in the divine nature\*,” and I shall add something further on this head in the end of this discourse, by giving several specimens how even those scriptures may be interpreted upon this foot, which represent the Spirit of God in the strongest language of personality.

Objection II. If the Spirit of God be really but a power of the divine nature, how is that consistent with those texts of scripture which speak of the power of the Spirit of God and the power of the holy Ghost; *Rom.* xv. 13, 19. Can there be the power of a power? Or, is this proper language?

Answer I. Yes, the language is proper enough, while we remember that the word power in one place signifies a faculty, in the other, the force of that faculty: Are not reason and conscience powers of a human soul, and yet it is never thought improper to speak of the power, that is, force of these powers or faculties. May we not say, that one man subdued his appetites by the power of his reason? And that the conscience of another man had power over his vices? Even the divine will is represented in scripture as a power in the godhead, and yet it is very proper to attribute various effects to the power of the divine will: And by the same reason we may speak of operations wrought by the power of the holy Spirit, especially when he is represented as a divine power.

It is natural and easy in this case to suppose the word power, in those texts to be an attribute, or property of this divine power, or faculty, personalized: For

\* See dissertations VI. VII.



when any thing is represented as a person, it is no impropriety at all to attribute powers to it.

Answer II. Or, if we should suppose the power of the holy Spirit to be a pleonastic expression, it is no more than is common in scripture, and there are many instances of it, as, *Eph. i. 5.* according to the good pleasure of his will, that is, the will of his will, so in *Eph. vi. 10.* "Be strong in the power of his might." *Eph. i. 19.* "Κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ ἣν ἐνέργησεν." "According to the working of the might of his power which he worked, or wrought." *Col. i. 22.* "In the body of his flesh." And a multitude of such oriental pleonasmis are found in scripture.

Objection III. If the Spirit of God be properly a power of the divine nature, or a distinct principle of action, and not a real and proper person, or distinct intelligent being, how can we offer a doxology to the Spirit, and ascribe honour and glory to him, together with the Father and the Son?

Answer I. Though I think it may be very proper, upon some occasions, to join the holy Spirit in a doxology, and to offer glory and praise to him, together with the Father and the Son, yet I think it may be affirmed, that there is not any one plain and express instance in all the scripture, of a doxology directly and distinctly addressed to the holy Spirit. Perhaps one reason, among others, may be, because both the Father, and the Son, considered as God-man, are proper distinct persons, while the proper, distinct, and real character of the Spirit, is that of a divine power, or principle of action, and it is only personalized by idioms of speech.

Now though there may be two or three examples of such a doxology in the writers of the three first centuries, and though it may be properly practised in many cases, yet if their be neither precept nor pattern for it in scripture, it ought not to be esteemed so constant, and so necessary a part of worship as modern ages have made it, and as I once thought it to be. For it is the scripture which alone could reveal the Father, Son and Spirit to us, and it is that must be the rule and ground of the particular worship we pay to each of the sacred three. See a larger discourse on this subject in my "christian doctrine of the trinity," proposition XX. question ii. \*

Answer II. Since I believe the Spirit of God to be co-eternal with God, and essential and necessary to his very being, and in that sense true God, and since he is represented in scripture in a personal manner, or under the character of a distinct person, therefore forms of praise may be lawfully addressed to him, as well as peculiar blessings may be said to descend from him. Though the scripture has not taught us distinctly to offer praise and honour to the holy Spirit, yet it has taught us to hearken to the voice of the Spirit, to obey the Spirit, to hope and wait for the enlightening, the sanctifying, and the comforting influences of the Spirit, and not to resist him; and since the holy Spirit is true God, I think it follows by evident consequence, that we may offer him the sacrifice of praise for the blessings which he bestows. There is no more necessity that he should be a real, proper, distinct person, or another conscious mind, in order to receive such addresses than in order to bestow such blessings. A figurative personality is sufficient for both.

Answer III. I add yet further, that if the holy Spirit had never been represented in a personal manner in scripture, yet a distinct power of the divine nature may surely be as proper an object of doxology, as a divine attribute or perfection, which does

\* See page 481. in this volume.

does not seem to carry in the idea of it so great a distinction as a divine power. I think there is no impropriety in ascribing praise and glory to the wisdom, or the grace of God. May we not properly use such language as this, "We give thanks to the grace of God? Let us give praise to the almighty power of God? Glory be given to God and his mercy? Let God the Father, and his eternal wisdom, and his love, be glorified for ever?" Now if these expressions may be sometimes used on particular occasions, with propriety and devotion, though we are not necessarily bound to use them\*, I see no reason why we may not, upon particular occasions, ascribe glory to God the Father, to his eternal Word, and his almighty Spirit, even though the Word, together with the Spirit, considered purely in their divine nature, may be really distinct principles of action in the godhead, and not real, proper, distinct beings.

It may be still further argued: Suppose the powers, or even the attributes or agencies of God, were expressed in yet more metaphorical language, yet they might lawfully be doxologized. May we not say, "Glory be to God and his victorious arm? Or to his watchful eye? Or, may we not ascribe glory to the Father and the Son, and their counsels of mercy?" and such like; surely then the blessed Spirit, whatsoever be his philosophical character, or idea in the godhead, may receive ascriptions of glory with as much propriety.

But if all these considerations were not sufficient to make us allow of doxologies to the holy Spirit, I say, in the last place,

Answer IV. As in some scriptures the Spirit of God seems to include in it the whole idea of godhead, acting by the blessed Spirit, why we may not ascribe glory to the blessed Spirit under this idea? May we not say, "Glory be given to God who sanctifies and comforts us by his blessed Spirit, as well as, glory to him who sustains the supreme dignity of godhead under the idea of a Father?" Perhaps if this sense be put upon the words, it may please some persons better, who are sincere and zealous believers of the doctrine of the trinity, according to the common orthodox explication: For this idea of the Spirit approaches nearer to the orthodox scheme, wherein the whole divine essence is included in each person, together with a distinct modality of that essence which is called the personality.

Upon any of these principles which I have mentioned, there is sufficient ground for a doxology to be given to the blessed Spirit, without supposing him to be a distinct, intelligent being, or another mind.

Objection IV. If the Spirit of God be properly a power, or principle of agency, in the divine nature, how can it be said, according to the common doctrine of divines, that he proceeds from the Father and the Son?

Answer I. It was proper in the objection to name the common doctrine of divines, and not the doctrine of scripture, for the text from which this is derived, *John xv. 26.* only saith, "that the Spirit cometh forth, or proceedeth from the Father, and that he is sent by the Son." But the scripture never says, that the Spirit, as to his nature, proceeds from the Son; no, nor properly from the Father, as to his

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\* I might here take occasion to give a full answer to that objection which has been raised by some trinitarians and unitarians, against my proposal of occasional doxologies to the holy Spirit, as prudence and expedience may require. See "Christian doctrine of the trinity," page 485. We are not necessarily bound to doxologize the divine attribute of grace, goodness, or wisdom, explicitly and distinctly; and yet prudence and expedience may sometimes direct it. The same may be justly said concerning any explicit doxologies to the holy Spirit, which is a power of the godhead.



nature, though his mission is originally from the Father; and, perhaps, it is in this sense that he is described in scripture as proceeding from the Father, because he is the divine efficient power of the Father, which is employed in all divine operations.

The notion of the Spirit's procession, or derivation, as to his essence and personality both from the Father and the Son, how current soever it has been, is not a plain and express scriptural doctrine, but a human inference drawn from this doubtful argument, viz. "That if the Spirit be sent by the Son as to his commission in the economy, he must proceed from the Son as to his nature, existence, or personality." But this argument, if thoroughly examined, has no great force in it. The *greek* churches were not influenced by it, for in elder and later days they have supposed the Spirit to proceed from the Father only, though they confess he is sent by the Son as well as by the Father; and this seems to come nearer to the plain and express language of scripture.

The common explication of the eternal generation of the Son, and eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father and Son, which was authorized in the *latin* churches, was derived down to us from the popish schoolmen; though it is now become a part of the established, or orthodox faith, in most of the protestant nations, because at the reformation they knew no better way to explain the doctrine of the sacred trinity. They contented themselves to say, it was incomprehensible, and thus forbid all further enquiries. But this scholastic, popish explication, of the manner of the derivation of the Son and Spirit from the Father, is, perhaps, the most unconceivable, and indefensible part of all the common scheme of the trinity which is called orthodox. I heartily agree to several other parts of it, viz. "That God is one infinite and eternal spirit, or conscious being. That the divine essence is but one and the same, though distinguished into three sacred persons. That the Word and the Spirit are so distinct from the Father, and from each other in the godhead, as to lay a just foundation for them to be represented as three persons." But their account of the generation and the procession, that is, of the manner of the derivation of the Word and Spirit from the Father, seems to me, at present, to be a set of words of which I can attain no ideas, invented by subtle and metaphysical schoolmen to guard and fence, as far as possible, against the charge of inconsistency, and was never designed to convey a clear conception to the mind of christians. Let us take a short survey what this scholastic notion is.

The most approved writers represent it thus; "that the generation of the Son is the Father's communication of his own self-same, individual, self-existent essence to the Son, together with the personal property of being begotten, in and by which property he differs from the Father."

And, "that the procession of the Spirit is a communication of the self-same, individual, self-existent essence, both from the Father and the Son, unto the Spirit, together with the personal property of spiration or proceeding, by which property he differs from the Father and the Son."

How strange soever this language appears to persons, who seek for ideas together with words, I seriously profess this is the justest, truest, and, I think, the plainest description that I can give of this opinion. If it be possible to make it plainer, I will repeat the same in another form of words.

The scholastic scheme supposes the eternal generation of the Son to be a sort of repetition of the self-same numerical divine essence of the Father, together with some new personal property, called filiation, which joined to the divine essence, makes up the

the person of the Son: And that this repetition, or reproduction of the same divine essence with it's new personality, is owing to the Father only.

It also supposes the procession of the holy Spirit to be another sort of repetition of the self-same numerical divine essence of the Father, together with some new personal property, called procession, which joined to the divine essence, makes up the person of the holy Spirit: And that this repetition, or reproduction of the same divine essence with it's new personality, is owing both to the Father and the Son conjointly; or as some rather say, it is from the Father as the original principle, by the Son as a medium.

There have been some writers, indeed, who thought it was not proper to say of the divine essence itself, that it did generate, or could be generated or derived; and therefore they supposed only the personality of the Son to be generated, or derived from the Father, and the personality of the Spirit to proceed, or be derived from the Father and the Son. But when you enquire what these personalities are, they can only tell you, that it is filiation or sonship, and spiration or procession. Upon the whole therefore, according to this opinion, it is sonship is generated, and procession proceeds. But the generality of the scholastic, or orthodox trinitarians go into the former sentiments, of the generation and procession of the divine essence itself, together with the distinct personalities.

With a solemn and unfeigned veneration I reverence the names and memories of those excellent men, those learned and pious authors of the last age, who asserted and defended these opinions. Nor do I think the devotion, and zeal, and piety, of our present times, equal to their's. But when I enquire of my own heart, whether ever I could form any ideas of all this sort of language, while I was taught it in my younger days, and firmly assented to these sounds, I must honestly confess, I could not. Sometimes I was ready to enquire further; but then I satisfied all my inquisitive thoughts with this general notion, that it was incomprehensible. I found it sufficiently evident in scripture, that the Father was God, that the Son was God, and the holy Spirit was God; and that they were usually represented in scripture as three persons: And though I had no distinct idea of the modus of it, yet I thought myself sufficiently defended, and intrenched in the forms of scholastic language, and armed with that set of phrases which make up this part of the common, or orthodox explication, without being too solicitous about conceiving that which was asserted to be utterly unconceivable.

I humbly adore the sacred three, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, as one God, inconceivably glorious, beyond, and above, all the thoughts and reasonings of men: And therefore I would not willingly indulge an unreasonable, and ambitious curiosity, in any of the mysterious things of God. Yet where, after my laborious enquiry, and daily prayer, I think I have discovered some mistake in my former opinions, not as to the doctrine itself, but as to the mode of explaining it, I humbly hope I may be permitted to part with a set of phrases which scripture never uses, which the popish schools composed, and which I never could understand, without the censure of heresy, or departing from the faith.

Let it be observed here, that the ancient *athanasian* explication of the sacred doctrine of the trinity, is a very different thing from this scholastic scheme, as I have manifested elsewhere. And though in the last century there were but few trinitarians who knew and believed the ancient *athanasian* doctrine, because they generally went into the scholastic hypothesis, yet in the present age this scholastic explication, of the genera-



tion and procession of the Son and Spirit, derived from the popish schools, is supposed to be indefensible, even by some of the most learned and zealous defenders of the deity of the sacred three.

But to return to the objection. If it were needful to maintain the eternal generation of the Son in his divine nature, and the eternal procession of the Spirit, in a way of derivation from the Father, there is scarce any scheme of explication that might be construed into a more rational and intelligible idea of it, than the hypothesis which I now propose: For if we suppose the eternal Word, and the eternal Spirit, to be two essential powers of the divine nature, they may be said to flow, at least in a logical sense, from the very essence of God the Father, as I have described in other parts of these dissertations.

And as for that text on which this objection is founded, *John* xv. 26. "The Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, whom I will send unto you." See a particular paraphrase of it at the end of this discourse.

Objection V. You have described the Spirit of God under various ideas; you make it to signify either a divine power, or God himself acting by his Spirit, or the agency and operation of this divine power, or the gifts and graces of the holy Spirit; thus, according to your account, there is not one single, settled, uniform idea, that belongs to this sacred name, the Spirit of God, or holy Spirit, in scripture.

Answer. This is freely granted: And it is the eastern custom, and particularly the *jewish* manner of writing, to use the same word in various senses. This sort of writing runs through the scripture, both in the old and new testament. Shall I instance in the word law? Sometimes it signifies the five books of *Moses*, sometimes the ten commandments, sometimes a doctrine of religion, sometimes the gospel, and sometimes it denotes a principle of sin, or a principle of holiness. The word grace also, in one place, signifies the favour of God, in another a christian virtue, and in a third text it denotes beauty or decency; and the *greek* word *χαρις* signifies also thanks. The word faith sometimes means an act of the mind, believing the revelation of *Christ*, and sometimes the object of that act, that is, the truth, or the gospel. And many other words might be produced of the same kind, such as righteousness, flesh, body, soul, &c.

But let me come nearer the point, and give an instance of the name of the second person in the trinity, that is, the Logos, or Word, sometimes it signifies a power of the divine nature, *Psal.* xxxiii. 6. and 2 *Pet.* iii. 5. "By the Word of God the heavens were of old." Sometimes it denotes God himself acting by his Word, *Heb.* iv. 12. "The Word of God is living and powerful, a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Sometimes it intends the complete person of our Lord *Jesus Christ* incarnate, *Rev.* xix. 13. "His name is called the Word of God." And at other times it means the Word of God, either written or spoken, as *Prov.* xxx. 5. "Every Word of God is pure." And in a multitude of other texts it has the same sense.

It is plain that the sacred writers had different ideas under the same word in different places, and if we should confine the terms faith, grace, law, righteousness, word, to one uniform sense and idea, it would be impossible to explain, or interpret, many texts of scripture.

Now, since many other words are used in this manner, in scripture, and even that sacred name, the Word of God, which denotes the second person of the blessed three,

why

why may not the name Spirit, which denotes the third person, be construed with the same latitude?

Let it be observed here, that it is not the custom of the sacred penmen, to write according to learned rules, and forms of logic, nor to confine the same term always to the same idea. They generally chuse a more lax and vulgar way of speaking; they use the same word in several senses, and apply the same term not only to the original, and chief idea, but to various things which are causes, effects, parts, properties, or adjuncts of that original idea: Which modes of speech, though they are very common and familiar, yet the critics afterwards invented learned names for them, viz. metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, &c.

I add further, that the most orthodox writers on this subject have found it necessary to construe the term holy Spirit in some variety of ideas: For they make it signify his influences, or his gifts, or his effusion on men, in such places where they thought it could never be applied to his person. The learned Mr. *Pool*, author of the "*Synopsis criticorum*," in his excellent little treatise of the "deity of the holy Spirit," affirms, that it must needs be taken so in many places of scripture, page 64, 65, he cites several of them. And that learned author, *J. H. Bisterfeld*, in his answer to *Crellius*, about fourscore years ago, and all writers besides of the orthodox sentiments, confess the necessity of applying different senses to the term holy Spirit, and that it must sometimes denote the effusion or influences thereof: As in *John* vii. 39. "The holy Ghost was not yet, given, because *Jesus* was not yet glorified." The learned know, that the word, given, is not in the *greek* original, but they all explain it by the gift of the Spirit in their translation. And so in *Acts* xix. 2. "We have not so much as heard whether there be any holy Ghost:" Which most expositors interpret merely concerning the plentiful effusion of the Spirit at *Pentecost*. And in other places, where the holy Ghost is said to "be given by the laying on of the hands of the apostles," as *Acts* viii. 18. it seems necessary to interpret it concerning his gifts, lest it appear too assuming to suppose a sacred person in the eternal godhead to be given to one man by the hands of another.

## S E C T I O N V.

*An explication of various texts according to this account of the holy Spirit.*

THE several texts already cited, and interpreted in the former parts of this discourse, shew how necessary it is to understand this term, the holy Spirit, with such a latitude, and in this variety of ideas. Here I shall add a few more scriptures, and those even of the greatest difficulty, and of the most considerable importance, to make it appear, that this discourse of the holy Spirit, is adapted to explain the several descriptions that are given of him in the scripture. The rest will easily fall in with it.

I. One of the most remarkable and important texts, wherein the holy Spirit is represented as a person distinct from the Father, and the Son, is in *John* xvi. 13, 14. "When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak, and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you." Here let it be noted, that the holy Spirit, who inspired the prophets,  
and



and revealed the mind of God under the *jewish* dispensation, was now appointed more explicitly to perform this work, in a more evident and conspicuous appearance than before, and a more plentiful and magnificent manner; and to empower multitudes to preach, prophesy, and work miracles in the name of *Christ*. Now as the Father did not design, under the gospel, to manifest his will by the appearance of angels, so much as in ancient times, and was about to recal the person of his Son from this lower world, this blessed Spirit, or the divine efficient power, was to reside in the church as the deputy, or resident, and prime minister, both of the Father and the Son. Upon these accounts it seemed proper to our Saviour, who is the divine wisdom incarnate, to describe this divine power by a strong *prosopopoeia*, and a noble allegory, as a messenger sent forth from God for this glorious design: And because the extraordinary effusions of the holy Ghost were not to be made till *Christ* was ascended to heaven to dispatch this messenger to the earth, and to send him on this great errand, therefore saith our Lord, "Except I go, the comforter will not come," verse 7.

Now, when a messenger delivers what his principal gives him in charge, he is then justly declared a true and faithful messenger: But when he devises things of his own head, and delivers them in the name of his principal, he is then said to speak of himself, and then he loses the character of truth or veracity. It is in this sense *Christ*, who was the messenger of the Father, says, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself," *John* xiv. 10. that is, "I did not invent this doctrine, it is no new contrivance of mine, but I delivered to you what my Father gave me in charge." And according to this allegory, when *Christ* says of the Spirit, under the representation of God's messenger, that he "shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak," the meaning may be twofold, 1. That he should not teach any new doctrine, different from the doctrine of *Christ*. 2. That he should not act like a false messenger, and impose upon them; but he should deliver to them the doctrines of *Christ* as one entrusted and sent by the Father and the Son: And in this sense he justly deserves the character of the Spirit of truth, as well as because divine veracity belongs to his nature as God, who is the God of truth.

Perhaps this explication of this text may seem a little too unnatural and figurative to some persons, who are truly zealous for the deity of the holy Spirit: But let them consider, that every interpreter of this scripture, who preserves the doctrine of his deity, is constrained to near as figurative a sense as this is. And whatsoever subordinations are ascribed to a supposed, real, proper, divine person, may be better ascribed to a divine power, under the subordinate character of a messenger in the divine oeconomy. It is none but the *arians* who can keep precisely to the letter of the text here, because they make the Spirit an inferior or created being.

II. Another remarkable text is, *John* xv. 26. "But when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:" Which may be explained thus, the Spirit may be said to proceed from the Father, because God, in the person of the Father, is considered as exhibiting the prime physical idea or essence of godhead, and thus may be conceived as the original of the two divine powers, viz. the Word and the Spirit: Thus the Word and the Spirit may be said to proceed from the Father, as powers from the essence.

Again,

Again, God the Father is considered as sustaining the prime moral idea or dignity of godhead, and thus has the original right and power of sending the Spirit, of bestowing the gifts and graces of his own Spirit, or of conferring gifts and graces by his own Spirit, and in this sense also the Spirit is said to proceed from the Father; the Father is the original agent, and sustains the supreme character in the divine oeconomy, and as such he is called the Father.

Sometimes God condescends to confer these gifts by the ministration of the apostles, and by imposition of their hands. Many persons received the holy Ghost by the hands of the apostles, as instruments, when in reality it was God communicated those sacred gifts, even as miracles were said to be wrought by men, when in reality the Spirit of God performed them. Sometimes *Jesus Christ* is said to send the Spirit from heaven, but then *Christ* is not only considered as the most glorious vicegerent, or minister of God, by whose mediation and ministration divine influences descend on the disciples from the Father; but he is considered also as one in whom the fulness of the godhead dwells bodily, as one who is God in human nature, as the eternal Word or wisdom of the Father dwelling in flesh. Now, in this respect the Spirit may be properly called the Spirit of *Christ*, and is said to be given, sent, and shed forth by *Jesus Christ*, in a superior character of grandeur and authority, than is, or can ever be expressed concerning any of his apostles.

When divine wisdom is represented in a personal manner, as in *Prov. i. 20, 23.* it is frequently supposed to denote our blessed Saviour. Now wisdom speaks there in a majestic manner, "Turn you at my reproof, and behold I will pour out my Spirit upon you;" and when our Lord was departing from the world, "he breathed on the disciples, and said, receive ye the holy Ghost," *John xx. 22.*

The Son of God, or the man *Christ Jesus*, personally united to the eternal Logos, or divine Word, is God over all blessed for ever: And being now ascended to heaven he sustains the office of his Father's vicegerent, and deputed king in the sacred oeconomy, and therefore the Spirit is represented as proceeding from the Father in an original manner, but as being sent by *Jesus Christ*; the authority of the Father and the Son concur in this matter. The lamb is raised to sit upon the Father's throne, that is, to exercise his Father's authority, *Rev. iii. 21.* and therefore the river of the water of life, which may denote the blessed Spirit, is represented, *Rev. xxii. 1.* "To proceed from the throne both of God and the lamb," that is, from the royal authority of the Father and the Son.

III. Text, *1 Cor. xii. 4.* "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." Verse 5. "And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord." Verse 6. "And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." Which is easily explained thus. Though the gifts are different, it is the same divine Spirit, the same principle of efficiency, or power of God, that gives them. Though the administrations, or services in the church, are various, yet *Christ* is the same Lord and master. Though there are divers miraculous operations, yet it is the same God which worketh them all in all believers who receive them. Now, that the same Spirit in the fourth verse signifies a power in the divine nature, or God himself operating by this power, may be learned from verse 11. compared with verse 6. "But all these worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." Both the will and the operation which are proper to God himself, and which are ascribed to him, verse 6. are ascribed to the Spirit, verse 11. where by it seems plain that the Spirit is sometimes construed to signify God himself, and



sometimes to signify a power in the divine nature. Thus the scripture attributes true godhead to the Spirit, under some distinction both from the Father and the Son.

IV. Text, *Isa.* xliv. 3. "I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground. I will pour out my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessing on thy off-spring." And, *Joel* ii. 28. "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." *Acts* ii. 33. "*Christ* having received of the Father the promise of the holy Ghost he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." In these, and many other scriptures, it is evident that the Spirit of God is represented under the character or metaphor of water, which is more plainly expressed, *John* vii. 38, 39. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water: But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the holy Ghost was not yet, given, because that *Jesus* was not yet glorified." Now, if the Spirit of God, in these texts, be explained to signify his influences, his operations, his gifts and graces, which are distributed and dispersed abroad like streams of living water in the church, and poured down or conferred on men, perhaps this may come nearest to the sense and idea of the sacred writers: And, as I hinted before, if we compare those scriptures herewith wherein the Spirit of God is said to be given by the laying on of the hands of men, such as *Acts* viii. 18. it will further confirm the explication of the term Spirit by gifts and influences.

V. The last text I shall mention, is that famous and contested place, *1 John* v. 7, 8. "There are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the holy Spirit, and these three are one: And there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one."

Now the three witnesses in heaven, in the seventh verse, may be well interpreted, God the Father with his two divine powers, the Word and the Spirit, which in this place, as well as in many others, are represented personally, for they are called *τρεῖς μαρτυροῦντες*, that is, three witnesses, or three persons bearing witness: And perhaps there may be some special congruity in representing them as three persons in this place, because they succeed each other, and chiefly witnessed in different successive oeconomies or administrations; viz. the Father eminently under the old testament bearing witness to the gospel by prophecy; the Word eminently in his incarnate state by his own ministrations; and the Spirit eminently after the ascension of *Christ* by his extraordinary and divine operations: And yet these three are one, *ἐν αἰῶνι*, are one thing, one being, one deity, not considered in a personal manner, but as a nature or essence.

In the eighth verse, "There are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood." These are represented also as three persons, for they are called *τρεῖς μαρτυροῦντες*. The best expositions that are given of them are these two.

1. They may be all considered as belonging to *Christ* himself, and then the water signifies the pure and holy doctrine and life of *Christ*. And the blood denotes the sealing his doctrine by his own death and martyrdom, and there is this reason why these witnesses belong to our Lord himself, viz. because it is said, verse 6. "He came not by water only, but by water and blood. And then it is the Spirit who beareth the third witness," that is, the glorious power of miraculous operations which attended our Saviour's preaching. Or,

2. They may be all considered as belonging to christianity, or exhibited among christians: And then the blood signifies the blood or atonement of *Christ*: Exhibited, perhaps, in the Lord's supper, which witnesseth to the truth of the gospel by it's power to speak peace to the guilty conscience: The water represents the grace

grace of regeneration, held forth; perhaps, in the baptismal water, which by changing sinners into saints witnesses to the truth of the gospel: And the Spirit most probably signifies the miraculous gifts of the Spirit in the apostles and primitive christians, which join to confirm the same gospel.

I think it most proper to refer the term Spirit among the witnesses on earth to the miraculous gifts of the holy Ghost, because the term Spirit, considered as a distinct power in the divine nature itself, is described as a witness in heaven.

Thus I have endeavoured to explain the doctrine of the holy Spirit, and to apply this explication to the most difficult texts of scripture. Upon the whole, I conclude, that since the scripture represents him under the characters of true godhead, and under the character of a person distinct from the Father and the Son, since also it is exceeding hard to reconcile strict and proper deity with three strict and proper personalities in the godhead itself, in a fair consistence with reason and scripture, it seems to be most agreeable to the word of God, that we should explain the personality of of the Spirit in a figurative sense, that we may better maintain his proper eternal deity, and his unity with the Father. This seems to be much more eligible than that we should explain his personality in a strict literal sense, for this would lead us into one of these two dangers, viz. either to make three distinct consciousnesses, or intelligent minds, in the one true and eternal God, or to sink the character of the holy Spirit into a creature, that we might save the proper personality.

I grant, when we have been accustomed all our lives to a particular set of words and ideas, it is pretty hard to persuade ourselves to make any little change in our ideas or words, even though the greatest advantages might be attained by it toward the defence of the gospel, and though it might remove some of the chief embarrassments which attend any particular article of faith. I wish heartily for myself and my friends, greater freedom of soul in the humble pursuit of truth. Yet I think I have not much varied from the defensible parts of the common explication of the trinity; and I have taken care religiously to secure all the foundations of divine worship, which concern the honour of the holy Spirit, and all our practical regards to him which concern our salvation.

I impose my thoughts on no man; and if there be any thing found in all this discourse which may indanger any necessary part of our christian belief; or which may diminish any thing of the divine honour which is due to the blessed Spirit, our sanctifier and comforter, I disclaim and renounce it utterly, and would be glad to receive a better explication which might be more secure from any such danger and inconvenience.

It is an easy matter for persons of wit and subtlety, and critical artifice, to embarrass the clearest explication of such sublime doctrines. It is easy to raise up a dust of confusion around the incomprehensible things of God, which have some darkness and difficulty in them when set in the fairest light. I wish every disputant of this sacred article, of the trinity in unity, would set it in a better view, and represent it in more easy and distinct ideas, rather than studiously batter down every scheme without building up any.

While we are tracing out these abstruse and awful subjects by the light of scripture, in this dark world, I am sure it becomes us all to keep our spirits in a modest and humble frame, and in a constant dependence on the divine aids of that blessed Spirit, which searcheth the deep things of God, and reveals them to men. As in my feeble pursuit of these enquiries I have always laid myself at the foot of this heavenly teacher,



that according to the promise of our departing Saviour, I might be guided by him into all truth, so I would now humbly recommend these papers to him, that if there be any thing in them proper to lead christians into clearer conceptions of his own sacred nature and operations, he would condescend to make them happily successful for that purpose: And beseeching my Saviour, that whatsoever sentiments of mine are inconsistent with divine truth, he would graciously forgive and cancel them, and never suffer any thing that I have written to have so unhappy an influence, as to lead the meanest professor of christianity into a mistake, in matters of so glorious concernment.

However, since there is some difficulty and darkness attends our enquiries into the metaphysical nature and essence of the blessed Spirit, his unity with, and distinction from the Father and Son, and since he has not condescended to reveal this mystery to us in his word in evident and express language, we may be well assured, that he has not made our participation of his divine and salutary influences to depend upon any clear, explicit, and certain knowledge hereof. Many a humble christian has been richly endowed with his gifts and graces, who had obtained but very imperfect and confused ideas of his abstracted nature. He has taught the holy penmen to write down his sacred titles and offices, as an enlightener, a sanctifier, and a comforter, in more plain and express language, than his sublime essence, and metaphysical idea or nature. And while we depend on his divine all-sufficiency for these purposes, and seek to God the Father, and his Son *Christ Jesus*, for the communications of his blessed Spirit, we have a divine promise that we shall not seek in vain. "If men, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more shall our heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?" *Luke xi. 13.* And this is the spring of our light, and our hope, on this depends our present holiness and our eternal comfort. Amen.

## DISSERTATION VI.

### *Of the use of the word person in the doctrine of the trinity.*

SINCE the word person has been used in most ages of the christian church, in setting forth the doctrine of the blessed trinity, and hath been applied to those three sacred ideas, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, it becomes almost necessary when we write on this subject, to declare the sense of this word, as it is variously applied in discoursing on this doctrine.

The sense of the word person, in the common language of men, is one single, intelligent, voluntary agent, or a principle of action that has understanding and will; so three men, or three angels, are properly called three distinct persons. Now, since it has pleased God in his word, to represent to us the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, under the character of three such intelligent agents, they may be called in human language three persons, according to this scriptural representation.

The distinctive character of a person is the application of the personal pronouns I, THOU, HE, to any thing; and wheresoever these are applied to any being, either simple or compound, that being is there exhibited in a personal manner, and may in that respect be called a person. Now, all the three pronouns, I, thou, and he, being frequently applied in scripture to the Father and the Son, and the pronoun he to the blessed Spirit, we therefore call them three persons.

I confess, I know of but two particular places in scripture where this word person is ever supposed to be used with reference to this doctrine.

One is in *Heb. i. 3.* where *Christ* is called "the express image of his Father's person:" And though the greek word *hypostasis* sometimes signifies substance, as it is translated *Heb. xi. 1.* yet in this place it seems to intimate such a distinction of the Father, from the Son, as is strong enough to answer the word person.

The next place is *2 Cor. iv. 6.* "The glory of God shines forth in the face, or person, of *Jesus Christ*;" for the greek word *πρόσωπον* signifies also person. In the first of these texts person is applied to God the Father, and in the second to *Christ* incarnate: Though it must also be confessed, that the critics in the learned languages, will hardly allow either of these words, *hypostasis*, or *prosopon*, among the ancient



ancient *greeks*, to signify properly a person in the sense in which it is used in this controversy \*.

I confess, I am not aware of any text, where any term that expressly signifies person is applied to the holy Spirit, or to the divine nature of *Christ*, considered apart from the man *Jesus*; yet since the sacred three have such sort of distinct actions and characters attributed to them in scripture, as we usually ascribe to three distinct intelligent agents, we make no scruple to call them all persons, and think there is sufficient foundation for it in scripture.

Yet let it be noted, that though the word person may be fitly used, and applied to the doctrine of the trinity, we are not to imagine that it should be always taken here exactly in the same sense and include precisely the same ideas, as when we call three men, or three angels, three distinct persons. This I gave notice of in my "christian doctrine of the trinity," pages 456—464.

In almost all arts and sciences it has been ever accounted a very lawful and practicable thing, to borrow several terms from familiar language and common speech, and to use them in a sense peculiar to some one art or science, though it be different from their vulgar and more usual signification. We may borrow a plain example from every mechanic trade; as for instance, a watch maker talks of a balance, a pinion, a hand, a spring, a barrel, a key, &c. and affixes ideas to those words very different from their original or common meaning. So when a metaphysician speaks of simplicity, passion, substance, subject, a patient, matter, form, &c. he gives those words a different meaning from what they have in common life. And why shall it not be lawful in theology, while we are treating of sacred and divine subjects, which are so much superior to our common ideas, to borrow the word person from familiar and common language, and use it in a sense that has some analogy to the common meaning of it, though it be not entirely the same.

In explaining this article of the trinity it is well known that there are two special cases wherein we make use of the word person; and both of them may require such a sense of the word as is a little different from the common usage; for human languages have not furnished us with words sufficiently distinct and apposite to express divine ideas; and therefore men have borrowed those words from common speech, which, in their opinion, come near to those divine ideas which they would express. The two cases are these.

The first is, when we apply the word person to three distinctions in the divine nature, and call the Word and Spirit persons as well as the Father; all these being represented in scripture as intelligent agents, or principles of action, we call them three persons.

The second case is, when we apply the word person to the human and divine natures of our Lord *Jesus Christ* united, and call this God-man, this compound or complex being, one person.

In the first case we suppose three distinctions in one divine nature to be represented in scripture, under three personal characters, or as three persons, who are all employed in our creation and salvation.

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\* *Πρόσωπον* is supposed to signify a person, 2 Cor. i. 11. "The gift bestowed on us by the prayers of many persons;" and I think this is the only text where it necessarily signifies a distinct intelligent agent, and this does not refer to any of the sacred three, but to men only. As for *ὁμοούσιος* some critics say, it must rather signify substance, in Heb. i. 3. because in the apostolic age they think it was never used to express person.

In the second case we suppose two natures united into one personal character, for the scripture represents God manifest in the flesh as one person, 1 Tim. iii. 16. "He was seen of angels, and received up into glory."

The application of the word person to *Christ* as God-man, has been largely vindicated in my second "dissertation on the trinity," where I have made it appear, that as any two material beings which are united together as two houses, trees, or fruits, may be called one complex house, one complex tree, &c. So the human and divine natures of *Christ*, though possibly each of them may be called one single person, yet when intimately united, may be called one complex person, or one complex principle of intelligent action and passion. I refer the reader to that discourse. See pages 511—517.

But when we consider the distinctions in the divine nature, and call the Father, the Word, and Spirit, three persons, it requires a little farther explication in what sense the characters of personal agents may be attributed to the Word and Spirit as well as to the Father, and that shall be the subject of the present dissertation.

As in the case which concerns *Christ* as God-man, the word person has it's signification enlarged to include two natures in it, which is more than common language admits; so in this case, which concerns three persons in one divine essence, the word person has it's signification narrowed, to admit rather less into it than common language generally includes. I think these things have been generally so understood by all learned trinitarians; at least in that common explication of the trinity which hath been called orthodox for four hundred years, wherein three distinct consciousnesses, or spirits, are not supposed to make up the godhead, but one single consciousness only, or one single spirit.

Now, if the complete divine nature, or the infinite spirit, be represented as including in it two distinct powers, which are called the Word and the Spirit, by way of analogy to the human soul, which includes in it the powers of mind and \* will, and if we suppose the human soul acting by the mind and will, to represent God the Father as acting by his two divine powers, the Word and Spirit, it is evident that the Father is properly called a person, an intelligent voluntary agent, with very little or no alteration of the common sense of the word in human language; and this appellation is what all the opponents of our doctrine will allow.

But when the Word and Spirit are called persons, which are supposed to be really but divine powers of the Father, whose inward distinction we know not, the term person is then used in a figurative or metaphorical sense, and not in so proper and literal a sense as when the Father is called a person. Yet that there is sufficient distinction between them to lay a foundation for such a distinct personal representation of them in scripture, will appear by the following considerations.

Consideration I. Are not the various faculties of man often represented under personal characters in common discourse? How frequently is a man represented as conversing with his own mind, communing with his own heart, following the dictates of his

\* Though I represent the divine Word and Spirit by way of analogy to the mind and will of a human soul, let it be observed, that the chief reason why I use the words mind and will, is, because they are the two single names generally given to the two chief powers of the soul; and as the mind denotes the knowing power, so the will is commonly understood to signify the active power. But if there were any single word that did include the intelligent and volitive power, and another single word that did denote the efficient or executive power of moving the body, I would much rather chuse two such names to set forth the divine Word and divine Spirit, as I have noted elsewhere, because I think this would come nearer to the scriptural representation.



his own will, or subduing his will and subjecting it to his reason? Do we not freely say, "My mind has laboured hard to find out such a difficulty, my will is resolutely bent to pursue such a course; my mind denies her assent to such a doctrine; or my will resists no more, but yields itself up to the conduct of my understanding?" How frequently are reason and fancy introduced like two opponents or disputants? Is not conscience at every turn brought in as a person speaking to the sinner, as an accuser charging him with secret crimes, or as a judge approving the actions of a good man, and condemning a rebel, and all this under a personal character and in personal language? Are not dialogues introduced oftentimes between reason and fancy, between a man and his conscience? And this not merely in studied rhetorical language, but in common discourse.

And since human powers are thus represented as persons, why may not the Word and Spirit, which are divine powers, be thus represented also? And why may not God be represented as a person, transacting his own divine affairs with his Word and his Spirit, under personal characters; since a man is represented as transacting human affairs with his understanding, mind, will, reason, fancy, or conscience, in a personal manner?

Consideration II. There is yet a further reason why we may expect such personal representations of the divine powers in scripture: For it is the custom of eastern writers and particularly of the penmen of the holy scripture to represent the several parts, principles, characters, or virtues of a man in a personal manner. So the body and the soul are called the outward and inward man, 2 Cor. iv. 16. So the principles of grace and principles of sin are represented personally, and have personal actions and characters attributed to them under the names of flesh and spirit, Gal. v. 17. These same principles are called the old man and the new man, which are personal names, Rom. vi. 6. Eph. iv. 24. So charity is represented as a person, 1 Cor. xiii. And understanding, or wisdom, is frequently made a person, in the book of Proverbs, even where it doth not so evidently signify the Messiah; and much more may it be exhibited as a person where Christ himself is prefigured and designed.

It is so customary with eastern writers to personalize every thing, that even inanimate beings, as well as virtues and vices, are represented by them under personal characters. The sun and the wind have personal properties ascribed to them Psal. civ. 19. "The sun knoweth his going down." John iii. 8. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." Here are knowledge and will attributed to mere corporeal beings.

The countries of Edom and Egypt, the cities of Tyre and Jerusalem, are called the daughters of Edom and Egypt, of Jerusalem and of Tyre, &c. Job said to corruption, "thou art my father, as well as to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister," Job xvii. 24. Sparks of fire are called the sons of the burning coal, Job v. 7. And the word son and daughter are applied almost to every thing in their style, which names denote personal ideas. It is no wonder then if in scripture the powers of the divine nature are described as persons.

Consideration III. I add further, that the jews were wont to distinguish the powers of a spirit personally from that spirit: And this comes close and home to our present case. When they represent a man as purposing and resolving any thing in his own heart, they say he speaks to his memra, that is, his word, his understanding, his soul, his will, or any of his powers. So the great God is oftentimes distinguished from his memra, or word, or will, or powers, or affections, in the same

same *jewish* writings. Thus the term *memra*, when put for God or man is often put for himself under a distinct personal character. There are some few places wherein this very word *memra* is evidently attributed to the *Messiah*, or *Christ* who was to come. See Mr. *Robert Fleming's* "christology, vol. I. pages 137—142." where are many citations of this kind from the *jewish* writings.

*Philo the jew*, who wrote about the time our Saviour was upon earth, and has left his writings as one of the noblest monuments we have of the ancient *jewish* sentiments, speaks frequently of distinct powers in the divine nature; and represents them in a personal manner. He acknowledges that God has two chief supreme powers, one of which is called God, and the other Lord, and supposes these two powers to be uncreated, eternal, infinite, immense, incomprehensible, and speaks of them upon very many occasions. And though he does not directly give these two powers the name of mind and will, for he calls them sometimes dominion and goodness, yet he speaks of them as divine powers, by which all things are created and governed. He makes the *Logos*, or wisdom, another divine power, or God himself. "These things, saith he, being considered, as it appears how God is three, and yet but one;" which in his allegorizing way he represents by the vision of *Abraham*, when *Jehovah* appeared to him. *Gen. xviii. 1.* "And *Abraham* looked, and behold three men stood by him:" This vision, in a literal sense he expounds of the *Logos*, and two angels: By the mystical sense, he saith, there was denoted *δ' αὐτῷ*, the great *Jehovah* with his two powers; and he repeats this in another place: "In the middle is the Father of all things; on each side of him are the two powers, the oldest and the nearest to the *δ' αὐτῷ*." See doctor *Allin's* judgment of the *jewish* church, page 147. Thus we see there was some shadow of the doctrine of the trinity, among the *jews* of the ancient synagogue; though they were as zealous asserters of the unity of the godhead, as either the *socinians* or *arians* can pretend to be: And it appears also by this sort of discourse, that they conceived of the sacred trinity as God with his two powers, which I have taken more notice of in another place.

Consideration IV. To make this the more evident, I add also, that most of the very primitive fathers of the christian church, when they speak of these things, describe the divine *Logos*, or eternal reason, or wisdom of God, as a personal power, or as a divine power under a personal character; and represent the *Logos*, or *Νῆς*, or *Σοφία*, that is, the divine wisdom, or mind, as a counsellor, with whom God consulted, in the formation of his works, and who was with God before all worlds, even from all eternity. And whosoever will read those early authors will find the *Logos*, or second person in the blessed trinity, frequently so described, that every reader would imagine a proper divine power, rather than a proper literal person to be there represented; though sometimes also they figuratively affix personal names to this *Logos*, this eternal Word, or wisdom. See the dissertation on the name *Logos*, page 533.

Consideration V. The common and usual explications of this sacred doctrine, which have been esteemed most orthodox among the protestant churches, both at home and abroad, have supposed the distinctions of the sacred three in the divine nature not to arise to the complete, proper, and literal idea of person among men; because they generally make the essence of all the three to be numerically the same. Therefore it can be but a metaphorical or figurative personality which they allow; and they call them three persons, only by way of analogy to three men, or three angels, since there are not, in their opinion, three distinct conscious beings in the godhead.

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The most ingenious and learned doctor *Wallis*, in his letters on the doctrine of the trinity, makes no scruple at all to say, that the word person, when applied to the distinctions of the Word and Spirit in the divine nature, is metaphorical, analogical, and figurative: And he frequently uses this manner of speech, supposing that three literal persons would not consist with the divine unity; and yet, I think, he has always been esteemed an orthodox trinitarian. "We mean no more," says he, "by the word person, but somewhat analogous thereto; the words person and personality here are but metaphorical, and so are the words Father, Son, generate, &c." See his third letter, pages 31, 39. I might cite many other writers who have been known and approved authors in this controversy in the last age, who make the distinction of divine persons to be a distinction of internal relative properties, in the self-same individual essence; which can never arise to the idea of a distinct, literal, and proper personality.

Consideration VI. To vindicate this metaphorical sense in which the word person is attributed to the sacred three, consider, that godhead, or deity, is ascribed in scripture to the Word, and to the Spirit; and there are also personal characters ascribed to them: Now if this sacred doctrine cannot be well explained in a proper and literal sense, both with regard to the deity and to the personality, lest we run into tritheism, and make three gods; I esteem it much safer to construe the terms of personality in a figurative sense, than to construe the terms of deity in that manner, and to allow only a figurative godhead to the Word and Spirit: For the proofs of their true and proper deity seem to me stronger than the proofs of their literal and proper personality.

And, indeed, most, if not all, the common orthodox trinitarian schemes, as I said before, agree with me in this, that the word person is not applied to all the sacred three in the full and literal sense of it, though the word God is attributed to them in the literal sense. If some have supposed a particular manner of subsistence, to be a person in the godhead; and others say, a person is the divine being in a particular manner of subsistence, and that the three divine persons are the same numerical divine being repeated in three manners of subsistence, it is much the same in this respect; for every one perceives, that neither of these are three distinct persons in the literal and proper meaning of the word; therefore it is plain the word person is here used by them figuratively or analogically, though they use the word God in it's proper and literal sense.

Consideration VII. If the personal characters which are attributed to *Christ* in scripture are too strong, and proper, and literal, to be solved by such a figurative personality, then let it be observed, that *Christ* had a distinct human nature, a soul and body in union with the divine Word; and surely this assumption of human nature strengthens the personal characters of I, thou, and he: This will abundantly solve the attribution of personal ideas to *Christ*. If the divine Word, in the sense and explication which I have given, be not sufficiently distinct from the Father, to be called a person, yet surely it may be allowed that the man *Christ Jesus* is a proper person, and his union to the divine Word does not abate or destroy his personality. The whole complex being, or God-man, may have a sufficient claim to personality, and all the personal pronouns I, thou, and he, are properly applied to him.

And as this sufficiently solves the personal ascriptions to *Christ*, since his incarnation, it will solve such personal ascriptions before his incarnation also: For I think there are many reasons to believe, that the divine nature of *Christ* formed and assumed his human soul into union with itself before the creation: That the soul of *Messiah* was the first

first of all creatures, was personally united to the divine Logos or wisdom before the world was, and continued so through all the ancient ages of the church, often appearing as the angel of the covenant, till at last he veiled himself in flesh and blood, and took upon him the likeness of man, which I have endeavoured to prove in another discourse.

Consideration VIII. If this scheme does not sufficiently account for the distinct expressions of the personality of the holy Spirit, let us remember that the personal characters of the blessed Spirit are not expressed in so frequent, nor in so strong, and plain terms in scripture as those of *Christ*.

1. In all the new testament there is only the pronoun *HE* attributed to the Spirit, but I think neither *I* nor *THOU*, nor *WE*, are applied once in all that sacred book; whereas *I*, *thou*, *he*, and *we*, are all ascribed both to the Father and Son.

2. The holy Spirit is often described in the notion of a divine power, or influence, rather than a person. He is said to be given to men, to be shed forth, or poured out on them; the apostles are said to be baptized with the holy Spirit, even with this very same Spirit, who is yet in another place called the comforter, and the Spirit of truth, and is represented in as strong language of personality as any where in the bible. *John* xiv. 26. and xvi. 13, 14. compared with *Acts* i. 5. The believers are anointed with the Spirit. *1 John* ii. 27. and filled with the holy Spirit, in opposition to wine, *Eph.* v. 18. And in *Acts* vi. 5. and xi. 24. they are full of faith and of the holy Ghost. And in *1 John* iv. 13. "He hath given us of his Spirit," that is, a portion or measure of his Spirit. And in *Tit.* iii. 6. "He shed his Spirit on us abundantly," that is, in a large measure. There is a part of the Spirit which was on *Moses*, that was given to the elders of *Israel*, *Num.* xi. 25. So a double portion of the Spirit which was in *Elijah* rested on *Elisba*, *2 Kings* ii. 10, 15. The Spirit is not given by measure to *Jesus Christ*, *John* iii. 34. See more in the fifth dissertation,\* where he is represented as the power of God. All which modes of expression seem to describe properly a divine power in greater or lesser degrees of influence, rather than a proper person; though at other times this Spirit may be represented personally in an oriental and figurative way of speaking.

3. The holy Spirit is represented at other times in the sense of some writers, as a complication of divine virtues, because in *Rev.* i. 4. it is called the seven spirits which are before the throne. And in *Rev.* v. 6. "The lamb had seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God;" which seems to hold forth the seven-fold virtues or powers of God which dwell in *Christ*, that is, a perfection of divine powers to answer his oeconomical exaltation, by the residence of the Spirit of God in him in the completest manner.

4. Let us remember also, what was before mentioned, that though there be one scripture in the bible, viz. *Heb.* i. 3. where the word *hypostasis* or person, is attributed to the Father; and one text, viz. *2 Cor.* iv. 6. where the word *prosopon* or person, is applied to the Son of God incarnate, yet I can find no verse in the bible where any word that directly signifies person is attributed to the holy Spirit, and therefore the personal characters attributed to him may be supposed to be only figurative, and such as may be attributed to a divine power.

Consideration IX. If it should be granted, that the powers of a human soul, a finite being, are not substantial and distinct enough to admit such personal ascriptions as belong to the divine Word and Spirit in scripture, yet the powers of a divine and

\* See page 597—601.



infinite being may be substantial and distinct enough to support such ascriptions. We know little of the divine essence but by way of analogy to human souls: And as the divine nature, or God, has something in him transcendentally superior to all our ideas of human souls, so the powers of a God, which, in condescension to our weakness are called his Word and his Spirit, may have something in them, even in this respect, so transcendentally superior to the powers of a human soul, as to be more proper subjects of such personal characters and ascriptions as the holy scripture has attributed to them; and yet their distinction or difference may not be so great as to make them distinct conscious minds.

Consideration X. I add in the last place, that if there be any expressions in scripture, either relating to the eternal divine Word, or the holy Spirit, which cannot be construed, or interpreted, concerning a particular power of the divine nature represented in such a figurative personality, I would then enquire, whether it may not be interpreted concerning the divine nature itself exerting that particular power: And in this sense the personality will appear more complete and more literal.

In this view of things the Logos, or Word, may signify God acting by his Word, as *Heb. iv. 12.* "The Word of God is living and powerful,—and a discern-er of the thoughts and intents of the heart." And the Spirit of God may signify God acting by his Spirit, as when *Ananias* lied to the holy Ghost, *Acts v. 3, 4.* He lied to God acting by the holy Ghost, God residing and operating in the apostles by his Spirit.

Now this representation of things approaches very near to the common orthodox explication of the trinity, wherein the Son and Spirit are represented as having the same numerical divine essence with the Father, but considered in a particular manner of subsistence, or vested with peculiar personal properties. Yet at the same time, the scheme which I have proposed is free from the heaviest difficulties that lie upon the common orthodox scheme, viz. The eternal communication of the same individual divine essence from the Father to the Son and Spirit: For my hypothesis supposes the generation of the Son to refer to his pre-existent human soul, or to his body or to his mediatorial office; and the procession of the Spirit to refer to his mission rather than to his existence.

Now, if we review all these considerations, and join the force of them together, perhaps it will appear, that the explication of the trinity, by the idea of a divine being with his two divine powers, will allow such a personality to the Word and holy Spirit, as may be sufficient to answer the representation given of them in scripture.

Yet I will by no means contend for the use of the word person to express the divine nature of *Christ*, or the holy Spirit. I have often asserted, and repeat it again, that when I express the doctrine of the trinity by three persons being one God, I mean no more, than that there "are three, who have sufficient communion in one godhead to have proper divine names, titles and attributes ascribed to them, and sufficient distinction from each other to sustain the various characters and offices that are assigned to them in scripture."

Perhaps the word person may be the best word we have to express the character of God the Father, or of *Christ* as God-man, in his complete constitution, as a complex being: Yet, perhaps, it may not be the very clearest and happiest term that could possibly have been found to express the characters of the Word and Spirit in a philo-  
sophical

sophical manner, considered as mere distinctions in the divine nature. But let it be remembered, that it is not the custom of scripture, nor the design of the great and blessed God, to represent either heavenly or earthly things to us in their own philosophical nature, where our concern in them does not depend upon a philosophical knowledge of them: And therefore in these matters God is pleased to accommodate his language to the sentiments of the bulk of the people to whom they were first written. So the scripture speaks of the motion of the sun, of the fixation, or establishment and foundation of the earth, of the pillars of the heavens, of the heart and the reins giving instruction, as being the seat of the soul, according to the *hebrew* opinion, though these things are not literally and philosophically true. Now since our salvation, does not depend upon the knowledge of the precise points of unity and distinction, between Father and Son, and Spirit; or whether the Word and Spirit be proper powers, or proper persons in their own sublime nature; but upon their divine alssufficiency to fulfil their offices, and support their relations to us: It is very probable that God condescended to talk to his people according to their own way of thinking and talking, and to represent himself as acting by his divine powers under the character of persons, without giving us any account of the real philosophical distinctions in his incomprehensible essence, how great or how little they are: And the reason of this his conduct may be, because an exact and just philosophical account of these things is, perhaps, too transcendent for our conceptions in the present state, or that it was not necessary to meliorate our temper and practice, or promote our salvation.

Let it be further observed, that though the term person has been long and generally used in the christian churches to express the distinctions in the divine nature, yet it has not been universally made use of for this purpose; nor has the doctrine been confined only to this word, either in elder or in later times. Several centuries had run out after the beginning of christianity, before this word was publicly and frequently used. *Justin Martyr*, a very early writer, calls the distinctions in the trinity, different manners of being, *ἑκαστος ὁμοῦς*. Others of the Fathers call the Logos, or eternal Word, a power of God, according to the language of the ancient jews.

The "programma" of the emperor *Justin*, to which all the churches gave their consent, as *Evagrius* witnesses, "historiæ ecclesiasticæ, libro v. capite 4." saith, "We adore the trinity in unity, and the unity in trinity; an unity as to essence, or god-head, a trinity as to properties or persons, *ἰδιότητες ἑκαστοῦ*." Here person is explained by property. *St. Austin*, who uses the term person, explains the trinity by modes or powers of the divine nature; representing the Father, Son, and Spirit, as mind, wisdom, and love; or God considered as an original eternal mind, knowing and willing himself. *J. Damascene*, the first of the fathers that collected a regular system of divinity, defines a person in the holy trinity, to be an eternal mode of eternal subsistence; *ἡ ἀντικειμένη τοῦ θεοῦ ὁμοῦς ἡ ἐν ἑαυτῇ ὁμοῦς*.

Thus also later christian writers, use the words mode and property, to describe a divine person, and that sometimes even in confessions of faith. The *Wirtemberg* confession calls the sacred three properties as well as persons. The confession of the greek church, 1453, calls the Father, Son, and Spirit, three properties, which are as it were the principles of all the other properties of God, and which are named three subsistences or persons. The *polish* confession, 1570, says, "They are three in their subsisting properties and dispensatory offices, yet these three are one." The same divine essence considered in a particular mode of subsistence, is the common way where-



in a divine person hath been represented by most of our modern theological writers. The sacred trinity is usually described by them as the divine essence with three relative properties.

The great *Calvin*, one of the chief glories of the reformation, describes the Son and Spirit as the wisdom and power of God the Father; and yet he calls them persons. But he resolves not to quarrel with any man merely because he will not admit the word person. See "*Institutionum* libro i. capite 13." I might cite many authors to this purpose, who, though they use the word person, yet do by no means make it necessary: And there have been some who have rather disliked the word than approved of it. St. *Austin* himself, who uses the term with great freedom, declares, "It is not because he finds it in scripture, but because the scriptures do not contradict it, and that we use it by a kind of necessity, as labouring under a want of words," libro vii. de trinitate. And as *Calvin* has cited him, "*Institutionum* libro i. capite 13." he declares, "It is not so much to express what is the real divine distinction, but that we might not be utterly silent how the Father, Son and Spirit, are three."

Since therefore, neither scripture itself applies the term person to the Word or Spirit, nor the elder nor later writers of the church, have confined themselves to the use of this term, I can see no necessity of the confinement of ourselves, or others, to it, when we are speaking of the pure distinctions in the divine nature. And when we are endeavouring to explain them in a rational manner, and to form and adjust our clearest ideas of them, I think we may use the term divine properties, or rather divine powers, for this end: Perhaps this word powers comes nearest to the genuine ideas of things, so far as we can apply human words to divine ideas; and this word powers makes the distinction greater than properties, and I think it is so much the better. But we have several precedents for the use of both these terms among ancient writers.

And yet after all, since the scripture has represented the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, in a personal manner, and exhibited these divine ideas to us as three distinct personal agents concerned in the works of creation and salvation; and since it has been the general custom of the christian churches, for above a thousand years, to apply the word person to the sacred three, I think we may infer, that it may be safely and conveniently used in discoursing on this subject. Perhaps an introduction of any new terms into our common and popular discourses on this doctrine, would give a greater uneasiness and confusion to the minds of christians, than would be easily counterbalanced by the advantages we might expect from any unusual words, which might be introduced under a pretence of clearer ideas.

It is true, that when we are constrained by opposers of the truth, to explain these things in a rational and philosophical manner, we may then distinguish names more accurately: We may then shew, how the term person may be more properly and literally understood, when it is applied to God the Father, or to the complete person of *Christ* the mediator, as the scripture, perhaps, has applied *hypostasis* and *prosopon*: But that the same term person may be metaphorical and figurative when applied to the Word and Spirit, considered as mere distinctions in the divine nature.

Yet as the scripture frequently speaks in this figurative way, and the great God, who indited it, foreknew that multitudes of christian readers would be ready to form personal ideas under his own inspired words, I cannot think it a matter of so great importance,

importance, as that we would change all our usual forms of popular discourse on this subject. The scriptural representations are, doubtless, sufficiently adapted both to instruct and incite us to perform all our necessary duties to the Father, Son, and Spirit, as our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier; and it is on these depend our peace and pardon, and our hopes of everlasting happiness. And if these are well secured, let not terms and phrases engage the fury and contention of those who profess the gospel of peace. He that "dotes about vain questions, and strifes of words, incurs the censure of the apostle, that he is proud, knowing nothing. This is the way to stir up envy, strife and railings, with evil surmises, and perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds," 1 Tim. vi. 4. It is time for christians to have done with all these: It is time for us to seek the truth in love, and to "follow after the things which make for peace, and the things whereby one may edify another." Rom. xiv. 19. We believe in God the Father our Creator, in the Son our Redeemer, and in the eternal Spirit our Sanctifier. Let us glorify the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit, by all due honours, unfeigned obedience, and everlasting praise. Amen.



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## DISSERTATION VII.

*Of the distinction of persons in the divine nature; or, a humble essay to illustrate the doctrine of the trinity, viz. three persons and one God.*

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### S E C T I O N I.

#### *The Introduction.\**

**W**HILE I am discoursing on the sublime article of the sacred trinity, I would always endeavour to maintain the just distinction between the general doctrine itself, and the particular modes of explication; and therefore I would first mention what I call the scriptural doctrine.

By a careful perusal of the word of God, I hope I am arrived at a just and reasonable satisfaction in this general truth, that "there are three which are called the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit, who are represented in scripture as personal agents, sustaining different offices and characters in the transactions of God with his creatures; and that these three having divine titles, properties and attributions given to them, must have such communion in the one godhead, or divine nature, as to lay a just foundation for these ascriptions." This is the general doctrine of the trinity, which has been professed by the greatest part of the christian world, and this is what I mean when I say more briefly, "there are three persons who are one God."

Now, since this doctrine appears to carry in it a seeming inconsistency, it has been the labour of christians, in all ages, to find out some particular schemes of explication, whereby the difficulties may be removed, and the seeming oppositions reconciled, whereby we may attain some clear conceptions, how one God may be exhibited under three personal characters.

Among the several schemes which have been proposed in order to reconcile the seeming inconsistencies of this doctrine, there is not any one of them that has given  
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\* By what I have delivered in the foregoing dissertations I have in some measure anticipated the design of this, though this was written before those. Yet since this dissertation exhibits the ideas of the sacred three, viz. the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, in a closer connexion and mutual respect to each other, and gives a more simultaneous view of my scheme of explication, I thought it not improper to place it here, that I might lay the better foundation for an answer to those objections which have been made against the doctrine of the trinity.

so plain, full, and satisfactory a solution to all the difficulties that arise, as to render all further attempts needless. There is yet room therefore for the employment of study and prayer, and humble endeavours to obtain clearer light.

Having surveyed the probabilities, and the inconveniencies which attend the several *hypotheses* which I have seen, I have ventured to indulge some degrees of assent to one particular sort of explication, which seems to me more correspondent to every part of scripture, and bids fairest for the reconciliation of some of those difficulties with which other schemes are encumbered. But I am far from having arrived at an assurance herein, nor dare I be peremptory, or positive, in the assertion of it; for even to this hour I look upon all these *hypotheses* but as particular human and fallible explications of that doctrine, which in general is divine and true.

Now, though the knowledge of any of these particular schemes is by no means necessary to our salvation, yet if divine grace will assist us to set these things in a reasonable light, it will add a sensible pleasure even to our inward devotions, when we behold the great God, the object of them, in a more distinct and conspicuous view. And if by this means we can better defend the true scriptural doctrine of the trinity from the objections of men, we shall do some honour to the truths of God and his gospel, and, perhaps, by this means we may have the happiness of establishing the faith of christians.

In order to explain in what sense three persons may be one God, we should first enquire, whether these personalities be intrinsic to the godhead or no. A late ingenious writer maintains, that though the scripture plainly reveals the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, to be three distinct persons, and to be one God, yet that the scripture does no where determine, that these three are distinct persons in the divine essence itself. He supposes also, that the Son and Spirit may have inferior natures, but being intimately united to the godhead of the Father, they may be said so far to participate of deity as to have all divine names, titles, and characters, ascribed to them, without the supposition of any manner of intrinsic distinctions in the godhead itself. See "the scripture trinity intelligibly explained by a divine of the church of England, doctor Thomas Burnet, prebendary of Salisbury," particularly pages 139—145.

Though the *hypothesis* of this author is formed with much ingenuity, and has some plausible appearances in it, yet I cannot give up my assent to it, for I freely declare it is my opinion, that the  $\Lambda\gamma\omega\varsigma$  and the  $\Pi\nu\mu\alpha$ , that is, the Word and the Spirit in scripture are described as properly divine in their own natures, and yet in their divine characters are distinguished from God the Father.

There is another reason also, why I cannot give in to this *hypothesis*, and that is, we know from scripture that the Son has a nature inferior to godhead, but there is no sufficient evidence that the blessed Spirit has any such inferior nature, even while it is granted there are several oeconomical inferiorities ascribed to him. The Spirit never seems to be represented as a complex being, or person formed of God and a creature united, though the Son be thus exhibited to us.

Though there be not therefore any express assertion in scripture, that there are three distinct personalities in the godhead itself, yet I cannot hitherto find any method of explication sufficient to adjust all the parts of this sacred doctrine, according to scripture, without supposing some distinctions in the divine nature. Then the enquiry follows, what sort of distinction is sufficient to answer the scriptural account of the blessed three?

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The distinctions, or differences, which we can suppose in the godhead, are these which follow.

1. A distinction of names, and external relations derived from creatures; this is drawn from God's relation to the works of his hands, as when the same divine essence, or God, is called the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier, because of the different operations and relations of God to men. By this some have explained the holy trinity.

2. A distinction of names, and internal relations, which is drawn from different relative properties in the divine nature itself, as they are usually called; thus the Father, Son, and Spirit, are described by some as a threefold repetition of the self-same divine essence, with some unconceivable internal relations to each other which are called, paternity, filiation, and spiration.

3. A distinction of modes, or properties, as when the different attributes of the divine nature, viz. power, wisdom and goodness, are represented as a sacred trinity.

Note, Those who suppose the sacred doctrine of the trinity to be sufficiently explained by either of these three distinctions, are called modal trinitarians.

4. Another distinction is that of divine powers, as when the divine essence, with it's two different powers of mind and will, or principles of knowledge and efficiency, are represented as the blessed three, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit. May I not call this real in some sense, since there is a plain reality in the distinction, though it arise not to distinct substances?

5. A real and substantial distinction; as when the Father, Son and Spirit, are supposed literally to be three proper, distinct, conscious agents, or three real, intelligent natures, which some have called three substances, three infinite minds, united to compose one godhead. And, indeed, if they are three distinct conscious principles, or have a different consciousness, I know not how to form any other idea of them than as of three conscious minds, though some writers are not so free in their expressions as to speak what the notion plainly intends. Those who explain the trinity in this manner are called real trinitarians.

If I might be permitted to speak with freedom my sentiments of these several opinions, I would say, that the three first of these distinctions do scarce seem to afford a sufficient difference for the various ascriptions which are given to the Father, the Word, and Spirit, in scripture; and as for the second distinction, it has this further inconvenience, that it seems to be made up of words rather than ideas.

The fifth distinction, so far as my ideas of it reach, represents the godhead as containing in it three real, proper, distinct, intelligent agents, three natures, or three conscious minds. The fear of approaching to the doctrine of tritheism, or three Gods, withholds my assent, at present, from that scheme.

Among all these distinctions, and differences, therefore, in my opinion, the fourth seems to come nearest to the scriptural representation of things, which describes God and his nature to us by an analogy to our own intellectual natures, or our own souls. This distinction of the divine essence, with it's two eternal powers of mind and will, is the greatest real distinction, and the most solid difference that we can conceive in one Spirit: And therefore I rather incline to it, because the doctrine of the sacred three, as represented in scripture, seems to require the greatest distinction that

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can be conceived in a consistence with the unity of God, who is the infinite and eternal spirit.

If there be some distinctions, or differences, in the divine nature, greater than that of relations, modes, or attributes, and less than that of substances, I know not what name to give it better, than that of divine powers. Let us therefore suppose the great and blessed God to be one infinite spirit, one conscious being, who possesses real, distinct, or different powers, which in sacred language are called the Word and the Spirit: And though this difference, or distinction, be not so great as to allow of different consciousnesses, or to make distinct Spirits, yet these two powers may be represented in scripture in a figurative manner, under distinct personal characters, as hath been shewn in the foregoing dissertations.

## S E C T I O N II.

### *A general proposal of the analogy between God and a human soul.*

**T**HAT we may go on step by step, and make regular advances towards the design in hand, let us consider, that whatsoever clear ideas we frame of God by the light of nature, we derive them from an inward reflexion on our own souls, and their various properties and powers of understanding and will, &c. supposing still the transcendent superiority of God above ourselves.

Let us consider also, that the clearest and noblest ideas by which God reveals himself to us in scripture, are derived from the same notions which we have of our souls as spiritual beings: It is by this way of analogy that we learn and understand what God is, when he tells us he is a Spirit, and when he speaks of his knowledge, his wisdom, his will, &c. Thus divine revelation happily agrees with human reason, in teaching us who, or what God is, by a resemblance of his incomprehensible nature and powers to the ideas we have of our own souls and their faculties.

I grant, that God has been pleased to condescend so far to the lowest capacities, as to describe his powers to us, sometimes by analogy to the powers and parts of our bodies, such as, eyes, ears, face, hands, breath, voice, word, &c. But these are not the clearest or nearest similitudes, nor the sublimest likenesses he has given us of himself: And therefore when we are endeavouring to form our highest and most spiritual conceptions of God, we look rather upon that analogy to our own souls in which he has been pleased to exhibit himself to us.

Since reason and scripture agree to teach us the nature of God, and inform us who, or what God is, by this analogy, I think in our enquiries on this sacred subject we ought to follow this analogy so far as reason and scripture allow us. Now it is evident, that a human soul, in it's nature, is one conscious mind; and it is utterly inconsistent with the nature of it to have two or three distinct conscious principles, or natures in it, that is, to include two or three different conscious beings; and since we are told, that God is one, and God is a spirit, it would be something strange if we must believe that God is two or three spirits.

And as the nature of our souls teaches us to conceive the nature of God, so the powers of our souls, by the same dictates of nature and scripture, teach us to conceive the powers of God. Since the human soul has two distinct powers, viz. the knowing power, called the mind, and the active power, called the will, why may we not



suppose the blessed God to have two distinct powers, called the Word and the Spirit\*, the one cognoscitive, and the other active?

Or, as the human soul has in it intelligence, volition, and a power of moving the body, so if there were any single term which signified both intelligence and volition together, I would chuse to apply that to the divine Word†: And if any single term signified the power of operation, or moving the body, I would apply that to the holy Spirit; because I think this analogy and resemblance would come something nearer to the scriptural ideas of the Word and Spirit; the one being represented rather as an intelligent, volitive power, the other as an intelligent effective power. But since we have no such terms ready made, and since my design here is not so presuming, as to express what the powers of deity are in themselves, but only to exhibit a sort of distant human resemblance of them, I shall content myself with the terms mind and will to express this analogy and resemblance, always supposing the term will to imply an active efficient faculty.

Here let it be observed, that in explaining these distinctions in the divine nature itself, I chuse to call the second person the Word, rather than the Son; for as some late writers suppose, that the sonship of *Christ* rather refers to his human nature, or to his mediatorial office, than to his godhead, so I must declare, I am much inclined to that sentiment.

Let it be also observed, that I use the name Word in this dissertation in it's divinest sense, viz. to signify a power in the divine nature as, I think, it is several times used in scripture, and not in that inferior sense, for the soul of the *Messiah*, as it seems to have been used by some *jewish* writers, and, perhaps, with some countenance from scripture also.

Though we must not imagine, that the Word and Spirit in the divine nature are exactly the same, as mind and will, or intelligence and power, in a created spirit, yet this is not a mere arbitrary illustration, or a similitude invented by fancy, for there seems to be a reasonable and sufficient foundation for it in the sacred writings; this will appear if we consider what follows.

The second person in the trinity is supposed by learned writers to be represented in several places in scripture under the name of divine wisdom, or understanding, and that not only in that glorious chapter, *Prov. viii.* where it is generally agreed to have this sense, but also in the ninth chapter, where "Wisdom built her house, sends forth her maidens, and crieth to the simple, turn in hither." There are also other texts applied by some interpreters to *Christ*, or the divine Word, viz. *Jer. x. 12.* and *li. 15.* and *Prov. iii. 19, 20.* where God is said to form or establish the world by his understanding or wisdom, as in other places, "God created all things by his Word," *John i. 3.* or by *Jesus Christ*, *Eph. iii. 9.* And our Saviour himself is supposed to call himself the wisdom of God, referring to his pre-existent state, *Luke. xi. 49.* "Therefore said the wisdom of God, I will send prophets, &c." And again, referring to

\* Though the names Word and Spirit, or speech and breath, are borrowed originally, some from the body, and some from the soul of man, yet the divine ideas which are represented by these names in scripture, are entirely spiritual, and therefore we must derive our best conceptions of them by their analogy to our own souls.

† The Logos, or divine Word, in scripture, sometimes signifies a word of knowledge, or manifestation, and sometimes a word of command or volition, and therefore if we had one single term for the intellect and will in a human soul, perhaps it would more exactly represent the divine Logos. Let it be noted also, that some of the ancient fathers call the Logos, the *τὸ θελημα*, or will of God, as well as the *Σοφία*, or wisdom. And *Calvin*, in his commentary on the first verse of the gospel of St. *John*, says, "The Son of God is called the Logos, sermo, that is, word or speech, because he is first the eternal wisdom, and will of God, "Dei sapientia et voluntas," and then the express image of his counsel.

to his incarnate state, *Luke vii. 34, 35.* "The son of man came eating and drinking, and ye say, behold a glutton and a wine-bibber, &c. But wisdom is justified of all her children."

Let it be noted too, that the ancient *jews* represented the word of God, and the wisdom of God, in such a personal manner, as appears in the books of *Ecclesiasticus* and *Wisdom*, in the apocrypha, which some divines have applied to the *Messiah*. See more in the discourse on the Logos, page 553—582.

It is manifest also, that the Spirit of God is represented as a divine active power. *Luke i. 35.* "The Spirit of God shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee." And our Saviour is said to be anointed with the Spirit, which is explained, *Acts x. 38.* "Jesus was anointed with the holy Ghost and with power." And whereas in some texts it is said, *Christ* wrought his miracles by the Spirit of God; in other places it is called the finger of God. And *Luke v. 17.* when *Christ* wrought miraculous cures, it is said the power of the Lord was present to heal. So the apostle preached, *1 Cor. ii. 4.* "In the demonstration of the Spirit and of power;" and other texts might be cited to this purpose. See the discourse on the holy Spirit, page 594—618.

And as the ancient *jews*, in their writings concur with the scripture in representing the Logos, or Word of God, as the divine wisdom, so they describe the Spirit of God as another divine power; and some of them take the Spirit of God for his will, for which sense doctor *Allix*, in his "judgment of the *jewish* church," page 155. cites *Maimonides*, and others.

The wisdom, and the effective power of God, are joined in several places in scripture, as being employed in creating the world, *Jer. li. 15.* "He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom," which is repeated *Jer. x. 12.* and seems akin to *Psal. xxxiv. 6.* "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the, Spirit or, breath of his mouth." And there are several other scriptures where the Word of God, and his Spirit, as well as where wisdom and power are represented as agents, or mediums, by which God created all things.

I do not pretend to produce all these scriptures as divine arguments or proofs of my hypothesis, but only to shew, that the similitude I make use of is not a mere invention of my own, but there is much colour for it in the sacred writings themselves, as well as in the sense of many christian interpreters.

May we not therefore conceive the Word and Spirit as two divine faculties, virtues or powers, in the essence of God? What if we should call the Word, for distinction sake, a divine power, or faculty of knowing and contriving all things? The Spirit an executive power, or faculty, which wills and effects all things? Or, as I noted before, what if the Word rather include knowledge and volition, and the Spirit the divine power of efficiency? Not that I would exclude all efficacy from the Word, or intelligence from the Spirit; for the holy penmen do not confine themselves to such a learned and philosophical accuracy. The ideas of these divine powers are oftentimes intermingled in scripture. Sometimes the properties of the Word may be attributed to the Spirit, and those of the Spirit to the Word; for they are both the inseparable powers of an intelligent almighty being, and have incomprehensible union and communion with each other\*. But since God is pleased sometimes to represent

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\* I might here cite some of the primitive christian fathers, as *Justin Martyr*, *Ashinagoras*, *Theophilus*, *Tatian*, *Tertullian*, *Irenaeus*, and others, who speak of the word, wisdom, power, counsel, mind, reason, and



his own knowledge and his agency by his Wisdom or Word, and his Spirit, why may we not conceive two powers or faculties in the divine nature somewhat analogous to our mind and our will, though they are not the same, since the chief knowledge we can attain to of the blessed God is by analogy to our own souls.

Here let it be noted, that when I represent the Word and Spirit by divine wisdom and power, I do not conceive them merely as two attributes of the divine nature, as justice, goodness, eternity, infinity, &c. but as such distinct faculties, or, perhaps, more distinct than the understanding and will are in human spirits, which two are called powers, rather than properties of the soul.

I grant, that sometimes the terms attribute, property, power, may be used promiscuously for each other; but when there is a distinction made between them, the terms property or attribute, are applied to any sort of modes or qualities, especially the essential ones, that belong to a subject: So immateriality, immortality, finiteness, changeableness, &c. are natural attributes of the human soul: Kindness, justice, faithfulness, &c. are moral attributes of a good man. But the term power denotes a distinct principle of physical agency in the subject, whereby it is rendered capable of acting in this or that manner: So the understanding and the will, so the faculty of perceiving sensible objects, and the faculty of moving the body, are properly called the powers of the soul.

In the same manner, by way of analogy, we may suppose infinity, eternity, unchangeableness, &c. to be the natural attributes of God; goodness, justice, truth, are his moral attributes; for none of these are properly physical principles, or capacities of action. But his Word, and his Spirit, seem to be represented in scripture as the physical principles of knowing, willing, and efficiency, and therefore I call them powers, because this sort of ideas seems to admit of a greater distinction both in God and in creatures, than those qualities which we usually call attributes or properties.

The reader will pardon the necessary impropriety, or unsuitableness, of some of these terms, when applied to the great and blessed God, since we are forced to borrow all our representations of divine things from analogy to human ideas, and the terms of human language.

I proceed now to set this distinction of the divine persons in an easy light, and represent it in one contracted view, under the few following queries.

and will of God the Father, signifying by these various terms, his Word and his Spirit, which two *Irenaeus* calls "semetipsum," or himself. The reader may find many such citations if he consult the learned doctor *Waterland* and his antagonists in the "defense and opposition of the queries; particularly query ii. and viii. &c. concerning the divinity of *Christ*, his eternity, his generation, &c." The author of the questions and answers, which are joined with the works of *Justin Martyr*, says, "God, or the Father, and the Word his Son, and the holy Spirit, ἐν ἑνὴν μὲν καὶ τὰ δυνάμεις are united as far as possible, for the Son is the mind, word, wisdom of the Father, and the Spirit is an emanation, as light from fire." Question 139. The primitive fathers do not always confine their language to such a philosophical niceness, but sometimes use those terms promiscuously, whereby they explain the Word and the Spirit.

## S E C T I O N III.

## Several queries to illustrate this doctrine.

Query I. **A**S the soul includes in it both the powers of understanding and acting, that is mind and will, may not the soul properly represent the complete divine nature, or God? And may not his Word and Spirit be represented by the human mind and will, that is, the power of knowing and contriving, and the power of effecting.

Some of the ancients have represented the Father as the whole of the godhead, and the Son and Spirit as his powers. *Hippolytus*, an anti-nicene father, expresses himself in this manner, “τὸ δὲ πᾶν πατρὶς, ἐξ ἧς δύναμις λόγος.” The Father is the whole, from whom is the power called the Logos or Word.” *Irenaeus* calls the Word and Spirit of God God’s own self, “semetipsum,” for they are always present with him as his word and his wisdom, libro ii. capite 56. And *Tertullian* saith, “Pater tota substantia est: Filius vero derivatio et portio totius. The Father is the whole substance, but the Son is a derivation and portion of the whole.” *Contra Praxeam* capite 9.

In some of the foregoing dissertations I have shewn, that not only the primitive fathers, but modern writers of the greatest reputation, have represented God as one spiritual being, and the Word, or Son, and the Spirit, as the wisdom and power of God the Father. And it may be made to appear, that this is not only the sentiment of single divines, but multitudes of them met together in synods, to form confessions of faith, have used the same manner of speaking. I shall mention only these two.

The confession of the *french* churches, 1561, saith, “God is one only simple spiritual essence, and in that singular and divine essence there subsist three persons, Father, Son, and holy Spirit. The Father, the first in order, the cause and original of all things; the Son his wisdom and eternal Word; the holy Spirit his virtue, power and efficacy.”

The *dutch* confession, composed 1561, and confirmed in a synod of the churches 1579, saith, “there is one only simple and spiritual essence, which we call God, and that in this one God are three persons, Father, Son, and holy Spirit. The Father is the cause, origin, and beginning of all things visible and invisible; the Son is the Word, wisdom, and image of the Father; the holy Spirit, the eternal virtue, and power, &c.

Query II. May not the soul be described as employing it’s mind and will in different exercises or actions? May not a spirit properly say, “I employed my mind to search out such a truth, I engaged my will in such a pious resolution, or in the practice of such a duty?” And in the same manner, may not God be said to employ his divine powers in his work of creation, viz. his Word in contriving, and his Spirit in effecting all things? Or in his works of grace, viz. the Word in redemption, and the Spirit in sanctification? Thus God created all things by his Word and Spirit, and he saves mankind by the same Word and Spirit\*. The great

\* God is not only said to act by his Word and his Spirit, but he is sometimes said to send forth his Word, and sometimes his Spirit, yet all this may be very fairly expounded concerning two divine powers, since in other



great God, by his Word or wisdom, directs the agency of his Spirit or executive power.

Query III. May not the soul be sometimes considered as the prime agent, in distinction from the mind and will, while the soul is said to employ the mind and will in particular transactions? And thus, while the divine nature, or God, employs his two powers, the Word and Spirit, may he not sometimes in this view be esteemed, in an oeconomical sense, the chief agent, and thus sustain a distinct sort of personality, even what is usually called the personality of the Father, though it may not signify that he is the author, or producer of the Word, or of the Spirit?

Is it not generally given as one reason, why *Christ* is called the Son of God in his pre-existent nature, viz. that he is appointed to his royal offices by God himself, considered as the supreme rector of the world? Now, if *Christ* may be called a Son in scripture, *Psal.* ii. 7. and *Psal.* lxxxix. 27. as being deputed to the mediatorial government, why may not God, the supreme rector of the world, who deposes him to this government, be called the Father on this account? *Psal.* lxxxix. 26. Surely I should suppose, that those who grant a filiation to be derived from the oeconomy, might allow the same concerning paternity.

Query IV. Is God ever called the Father in scripture, as giving birth or origin to the divine nature, either of the Word or Spirit? Are they ever plainly represented as depending upon him, or derived from him, as to their divine existence? Does not the word Father rather signify the godhead, considered as the supreme head, as the spring and origin of all creatures, or as being the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ* as man? Or, at most, as only sustaining the character of the Father, or chief agent, in the oeconomy of creation and redemption?

Query V. May not the human mind and the will be represented in a personal manner, or as distinct personal agents, at least by a figurative way of speaking, though they are but two powers of the same soul? May I not use such language as this, "My mind has laboured hard to find out such a difficulty; my will is resolutely bent to pursue such a course?" And many other common expressions there are of the same nature, wherein the mind and will are still more evidently and plainly represented as persons.

And since human powers are thus represented as persons, why may not the Word and the Spirit, which are divine powers, be thus represented also? and why may not God be represented as a person transacting his own divine affairs with his Word and his Spirit under personal characters, since a man is often represented as transacting human affairs with his understanding, mind, will, reason, fancy, or conscience, in a personal manner? See this treated of more at large in the considerations contained in the "dissertation on the use of the word person," See page 605—613.

Query VI. Have not the greatest part of the writers on this subject applied the word person to such sort of ideas, or distinctions in the divine nature, as would not bear the proper and literal application of that word, which properly and literally signifies a distinct conscious mind? And therefore they have been constrained to use the word

other places of scripture God is said to send several things which have no proper personality, *Psal.* lvii. 3. "God shall send forth his mercy and his truth," *Psal.* lxxviii. 49 where the original *hebrew* by the same word expresses "God sending forth the fierceness of his anger, wrath and indignation, as he does the sending forth of evil angels." *Psal.* cxi. 9. "He sent forth redemption to his people." *Psal.* xx. 2. "The Lord send thee help from the sanctuary."

word in an analogical and figurative sense. The reverend doctor *Wallis*, in his letters on the "doctrine of the trinity," illustrates this doctrine of the Father, Son, and Spirit, by the essence, the wisdom, and the force, or executive power of a human soul, letter I. page 16. and freely acknowledges, that the name of person, when it is applied to this divine subject, is metaphorical, or figurative. And, indeed, those who make the greatest distinction between the sacred three, viz. the true *athanasians*, do still suppose, that the word person is not taken in the most complete sense of three separate, or separable spirits, as three men, or three angels, when it is applied to the doctrine of the trinity.

Query VII. Since the mind and will make up the soul, and the soul acts by them in all things that it doth, may not each of these powers be called the soul? May we not say, the mind is the soul, or, the will is the soul? So if the Word and Spirit are those divine powers by which God doth every thing, may not each of them be called God? May we not say, the Word is God, and the Spirit is God? May not what each of them does be appropriated to God, since they are the powers by which God operates? And does not this bid fair for the true meaning of scripture, where such sort of language appears? And especially when we consider that this is the language of the ancient *jews* and the primitive christians, who called the Logos God, and attribute to God what is done by his divine Word or his Spirit.

Query VIII. Doth not this representation of things shew how the sacred three, that is, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, have sufficient unity, or oneness of nature, to be exhibited to us in scripture as one God, and yet how they may have a sufficient distinction between them, to be set forth, especially in the language of the eastern nations, where the scripture was written, as three personal agents? Thus there are three that dwell in heaven, and bear witness to the gospel, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one, 1 *John* v. 7. For the proof of the divine authority of this text, see the learned doctor *Calamy's* sermons at the end of his treatise of the trinity, which contain arguments in them that are hardly to be refuted.

## S E C T I O N IV.

*The Conclusion.*

**F**AR be it from me to assert this explication of the sacred doctrine of the trinity with any positive airs, or in assured language: Much less would I demand the assent of others, and pretend to determine their opinion, or faith of this mystery, by my manner of comparing it with things human, even though the comparisons and resemblances are borrowed from divine revelation. All that I aim at here, is to gain, and give as clear and distinct ideas as I can of the words which the scripture uses, that, as far as possible, in explaining the word of God, I might secure myself and others from talking without ideas. And since I think it is evident, that the scripture represents each of the sacred three as true God, and yet represents them sometimes, under distinct personal characters, my only design and ambition is, to make out at least some possibility of this sacred doctrine to the understandings of men, to secure it from ridicule and contempt, and to wipe off that unreasonable reproach of nonsense and absurdity, which has been by too many writers so plentifully thrown upon the deep things of God,



God, merely because they seem too hard to be perfectly adjusted and explained by men.

Though I have used some human comparisons in this and the foregoing dissertations, and have formed some resemblances between the great God and the soul of man, yet let none imagine, that things divine can be exactly paralleled, or adjusted by any precise conformity to things human. I presume no farther, than to exhibit a sketch, or distant shadow of heavenly things. The name of God has something in it so superior to all our human ideas, that it may be doubted, whether his very essence may not be something almost as much superior to our ideas of a spirit, as a spirit is superior to a body.

When God is pleased to represent his powers and actions by corporeal images, such as hands, ears, eyes, seeing, hearing, &c. we are sure this is not proper, but analogical language. When God is described as a spirit as to his essence or substance; when scripture speaks of his understanding, his will, his Word, and his Spirit, it may bear an enquiry, whether this be a most exact, natural, and univocal description of him; or, whether it be not rather a sort of similar representation of God by way of condescension to our human ideas. It is hard, if not impossible, for us, in some cases, to say infallibly, that this or that is true concerning God the Father, his Word, or his Spirit, because it is true concerning creatures; that this or that cannot be true concerning God the Father, his Word, or his Spirit, because, perhaps, it cannot be true concerning creatures; for the most exalted ranks of creatures that we know, are very poor imperfect shadows of the Creator.

I cannot think it reasonable, indeed, to interpret the natural divine attributes, or perfections, such as knowledge, power, goodness, so intirely in an analogical sense, as that ingenious author, the arch-bishop of *Dublin*\* has done, because our common ideas of these words, knowledge, power, goodness, are more applicable to the divine nature in an univocal sense: Yet this sacred doctrine of three personalities relating to one divine essence, may with much better reason be explained or construed in this analogical manner, since our common ideas of Father, Word, Spirit, person, are not so applicable thereto in an univocal signification. I am well assured, that if such analogical explications be allowable in any part of theology, the doctrine of the trinity lays the best claim to it.

I add further also, that every scheme and explication of this sacred doctrine amongst the real or modal trinitarians, which hath had any manner of claim to orthodoxy, does suppose the divine essence to have something in it that is not univocal to our ideas of a spirit: The most orthodox explainers are all forced to represent the distinctions of persons in the godhead, as something for which there is no perfect parallel in created spirits, and are forced to recur to analogical ideas, and analogical language.

Now if it be so, then who shall determine what differences and distinctions may be found in a nature or essence so infinitely superior to all our thoughts, so much unknown, and so incomprehensible? And, why may not the blessed God represent these distinctions in his own nature, in a way of personality, or as three distinct persons, supposing that such a representation will easily lead the bulk of mankind into such conceptions of his oeconomical transactions with us, as are fit to engage them to adore, worship, trust in, and love their Creator, their Redemer, and their Sanctifier? All these duties we may practise by the influence of scriptural revelation, without a philosophical or univocal idea of what the great God is in his own sublime, abstruse,

\* Doctor William King.

and unsearchable essence. "God is great, and we know him not." Thousands of saints and martyrs have gone to heaven with triumph by the practice of these duties, under the influence of a humble faith, without further philosophical enquiries.

It will be replied then, "What has made the christians of all ages so curious to penetrate further into these deep things of God, than was necessary for their own faith and practice in order to salvation?"

To answer this let it be observed, that there may be some advantages for the encrease of christian knowledge, for personal piety, and for the instruction of others derived from our pursuit of clear ideas in the great doctrines of the gospel. But to lay that consideration aside at present, there is another answer very obvious and easy, and it is this. The primitive christians found perpetual objections against the doctrines of their faith raised by the heathen writers; this constrained them to enter into a deeper enquiry; and the violent opposition that was made to those doctrines by the patrons of several errors in the first and following ages, set the christians in every age at work to draw out the matters of their belief into various human forms; and they did this in order to defend them against those who attacked them in a variety of methods of human reasoning and artifice. And particularly in the present controversy, when the opposers in all ages have endeavoured to represent the doctrine of the trinity as utterly inconsistent both with reason and scripture, the believers of this doctrine have found it proper to search out some way and manner in which it is possible this doctrine may be conceived without such inconsistency.

For my part, I confess, that my faith, as a christian, had contented itself with more general ideas of this doctrine, without enquiring, so far at least, into the modus of it, had it not been for the various objections that are raised against the possibility of it in any form or modus whatsoever. And though I have now taken the freedom to declare, that I prefer the representation which I have given in these discourses above any other schemes of explication which I have seen, yet I am not so vain as to expect, that this hypothesis will immediately relieve every difficulty that attends the sacred doctrine of the trinity. I am well aware of various exceptions that will be made, and I have carefully considered some of the most important of them in papers that lie by me. I have also made experiment, how happily this scheme furnishes out an answer to the chief exceptions of a considerable, but unknown writer, who has attacked my little discourse of the "christian doctrine of the trinity," in a "sober appeal to a turk or an indian." Part of a reply to that book has been already made in the second and third dissertations printed last year. Several parts more are ready to follow this. But it was necessary to exhibit the scheme on which the solution of difficulties is founded, before I could pretend to solve the difficulties themselves: And the printed sheets have swelled to such a bulk already, as renders it very inconvenient to crowd all my design into this volume. According to the acceptance that these papers meet within the world, I may be encouraged shortly to publish the rest.

After all, I am free to declare, that I am not so fond of any particular hypothesis, but I shall be ready to relinquish it for another, that will afford a better interpretation of all the scriptures that relate to the blessed three, and a happier solution of all the objections that have been raised against this article. I should rejoice to see so clear



and bright an explication of it arise in the christian world, as shall overcome and scatter all the difficulties and darkneses that have hitherto hung about it, and shall set it in so divine and triumphant a light, as shall penetrate every soul, diffuse universal conviction, and demand a ready and unshaken assent. But, perhaps, it is above the privilege of a mortal state, to expect the accomplishment of such a wish. In the mean while, let us pay the homage of our understandings to the supreme incomprehensible, by firmly believing what God has plainly revealed, and wait for the favours of higher illumination in the regions of light and immortality. Amen.

USEFUL

USEFUL and IMPORTANT  
QUESTIONS  
CONCERNING

JESUS the Son of GOD

FREELY PROPOSED:

With a HUMBLE ATTEMPT to answer them  
according to SCRIPTURE.



THE  
GOSPEL OF  
MATTHEW  
O U E S T I O N S

Is Jesus the Son of God?

THE  
PROPOSITION

THE  
PROPOSITION

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T H E  
P R E F A C E.

**I**T cannot be of much importance for the reader to be informed who was the writer of these papers: Yet if it will be any satisfaction, the author himself presumes to say, it is one who has spent many years of his life in diligent inquiries into the sacred doctrines of the gospel, by a constant and laborious search of the holy scriptures, nor is he ashamed to add, with continual application to the God of all light and grace for the instruction of his holy Spirit that he might better understand the things discovered in his word. He also takes the freedom to say, these papers are the product of that part of life when his powers of mind and body were in full vigour.

The author has sometimes been ready to suppose, that several of the questions here proposed, may be very useful towards the further explaining some of those parts of scripture which have been less studied, especially concerning God the Father, and the divine and human natures of his Son *Jesus Christ*, whom to know, to trust in, and to love, is eternal life: and he thinks he can safely appeal to God concerning the honesty and sincerity of his own endeavours, to give a faithful answer to all these enquiries, according to the clearest light he could find in the holy scriptures.

He has one favour to beg of his readers, and that is, that they would not examine any of these papers by the mere dictates of their own reasoning powers, for the subject is a mere matter of divine revelation; nor that they would take the sentiments or schemes of elder or later writers, whether schoolmen or fathers, or divines of any party, for a perfect test of truth and orthodoxy in these sacred subjects.

Yet he freely and delightfully confesses these following articles borrowed from the *albanasian* creed, viz. "We believe and confess the Lord *Jesus Christ* the Son of God, is both God and man; God of the same substance with the Father, and man of the substance of his mother, born into the world; perfect God and perfect man; of a reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting together: Equal to the Father, as touching his godhead, and yet inferior to the Father, as touching his manhood: One, not by conversion of the godhead into the flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God, so as to become one personal agent, or one person: and as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man are one *Christ*, who suffered for our salvation, &c."

Though I freely and cheerfully acknowledge all this, yet I take no human writings for a test of the divinity or truth of my opinions: And I could wish all my readers would lay aside all other teachers, besides the mere writers of the holy scriptures, in such enquiries where the light of these divine truths will also shine brightest, which are not to be known by the mere light of nature, but are intirely to be learned by the revelation of God to his Son *Jesus Christ*, and to his holy apostles.

And



And if this practice be sincerely pursued, the author humbly hopes these papers may find acceptance among the diligent and honest enquirers after truth, so far at least as to have his unwilling mistakes pitied and forgiven, and his sincere endeavours accepted, to make known the scripture to his fellow-christians in those important articles that relate to God the Father, and his Son *Jesus Christ* our Lord, which are of so much importance toward our salvation.

Yet finally to avoid all objections and dangers of mistake, I think it may be proper here to take notice, that there have been generally two ways among our protestant divines allowed to explain the filiation or sonship of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, in his divine nature; the one is, the real and supernatural, which is granted to be utterly incomprehensible, relating chiefly to the nature of the Father and the Son; the other is scriptural and oeconomic, relating chiefly to their characters or offices in our salvation, which is more easy to be understood: I must acknowledge I incline most to the second, because this allows the most perfect equality, even oneness or sameness in the godhead, whether applied to the Father or the Son, and thus it maintains the true godhead itself to be underived and self-existent in both; and upon this supposition I believe the second of these writers have been always esteemed perfectly sound and orthodox, as well as the first.

USEFUL

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USEFUL and IMPORTANT  
Q U E S T I O N S  
C O N C E R N I N G  
J E S U S the Son of G O D  
F R E E L Y P R O P O S E D, &c.

---

Q U E S T I O N I.

*What is the meaning of the name Son of God, as given to Christ in the new testament, where the belief of it is necessary to salvation?*

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I N T R O D U C T I O N.

**I**T is of some importance in the doctrines of the gospel, and especially in the great article of the blessed trinity, to know the meaning of the name Son of God, which is so often given to our Lord *Jesus Christ* in the new testament: for hereby we shall be better able to understand the chief import and design of those places of scripture.

But here I desire my reader to observe, that I am not enquiring into the highest and most sublime sense of which it is possible that our Lord himself might have the idea when he used that word, but what is the sense that *Christ*, or the apostles and writers



ters of the new testament more directly designed to convey to those who heard them, and in what sense the people generally could and did understand this name.

It is evident from several expressions of *Christ*, that he well knew that his own words sometimes carried in them a much nobler and sublimer signification, than barely that which he designed to convey to the jews, or even to his own disciples at that time: As when he says to the jews, "Before *Abraham* was, I am," *John* viii. 58. And so when he says to his disciples, *John* xiv. 10. "I am in the Father, and the Father in me," they could not know that glorious and sublime relation of *Christ* to the Father, and his intimate oneness with the Father, which he himself was perfectly acquainted with.

My chief business in this discourse therefore is only to shew what is the true idea or meaning of the word Son of God, which our Saviour or the sacred writers designed to convey to their disciples through all ages and nations by this name, and in which it is possible their hearers could understand them, or we who read the same words.

And in order to find this sense of it, let us consider those texts of scripture wherein the belief of *Christ* to be the Son of God is made the great requisite in order to salvation, and a necessary ingredient of christianity. For in these places of scripture, these two considerations will offer themselves; first, that the sense of these words must be "plain, familiar, and easy to be understood;" otherwise it could not be made a necessary article, or a fundamental of the christian faith. It must have also, secondly, "some apparent connexion with and influence into our salvation," otherwise the belief of it would not have been made so grand a requisite in order to be saved; for it is scarce to be imagined that the blessed God would appoint any mere arbitrary and unoperative speculations to be the terms of our enjoying his favour. Now both these considerations will give us some assistance toward our finding out the true sense of this title.

The texts of scripture, wherein a belief of *Jesus* to be the Son of God seems to be made the great necessary term of our salvation, are such as these. *John* iii. 18. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." *John* xx. 21. "These things are written, that ye might believe that *Jesus* is the *Christ*, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." 1 *John* v. 13. "These things have I written to you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." 1 *John* iv. 15. "Whosoever shall confess that *Jesus* is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him." 1 *John* ii. 23. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." *Acts* viii. 37. "And *Philip* said to the eunuch, if thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest be baptized; and he answered and said, I believe that *Jesus Christ* is the Son of God: and he baptized him."

Now if believing or not believing *Christ* to be the Son of God has salvation and damnation annexed to it by the sacred writers, then surely it is of considerable importance to know what this name means, that we may not include too little in it, and by leaving out some important part, expose ourselves to that anathema; nor include too much in it, and so be tempted to lay our weaker neighbours under the like condemnation for want of sufficient knowledge.

But blessed be God, since it is a name of such importance, he has not confined this name precisely to one single, narrow, abstruse and difficult idea, but has affixed it to several ideas in scripture, that so if we receive it in the most important senses

we may be secured from the scriptural condemnation, though we should not happen to understand and receive it in all the sublime senses which may be applied to it.

Let it be noted also, that perhaps the various imaginations and reasonings of men may have affixed more senses to this phrase than scripture has ever done: Yet, in order to give this enquiry a fuller consideration, we will survey the several senses which have been usually put upon it; and this shall be the first argument which I shall use toward the proof of the true signification of this name in the new testament, that is, by way of a disjunctive syllogism, proposing several and excluding some of them.

# S E C T I O N I.

*The first argument toward the proof of the sense of this name, Son of God.*

**T**HIS name, Son of God, hath been supposed to be given to our Lord *Jesus Christ* upon some or all of these five accounts. 1. Because of an eternal and unconceivable generation by the person of the Father in the sameness of the divine essence. 2. Because of the glorious derivation of his human soul from God before the creation of this world. 3. Because of his incarnation or coming into this world by an extraordinary conception, and birth of a virgin without an earthly father, by the immediate operation of God. 4. Because of his resurrection from the dead, and high exaltation. 5. In order to point out that glorious person who had in general some sublime and singular relation to God, and who also was to sustain the character and office of the *Messiah*, the Saviour of the world.

1. The first of these senses is patronized by many writers, viz. "That an eternal unconceivable generation of the person of the Son by the person of the Father in the sameness of the divine essence, consubstantial, coequal and coeternal with the Father," is included in the name SON OF GOD.

But I am persuaded this can never be the sense of this name in those several texts before cited: They can never signify, that it is necessary to salvation to believe *Christ* to be the "eternal Son of God as a distinct person in the same divine essence, proceeding from the Father by such an eternal and incomprehensible generation." For,

1. If this be ever so true, yet it is confessed to be unconceivable. Now, if it be so very unconceivable, so mysterious and sublime a doctrine, then I do not think the gracious God would put such a difficult test upon the faith of young disciples, poor illiterate men and women, in the very beginning of the gospel, and exclude them from heaven for not believing it.

2. Nor indeed is this eternal generation and consubstantial sonship clearly enough revealed in scripture for us to make it a fundamental article in any age, and to damn all who do not receive it. I cannot see evidence enough in the word of God to make the salvation of all mankind, the poor and the ignorant, the labouring men and the children, even in such a day of knowledge as this is, to depend on such a doctrine, which the most learned and pious christians in all ages have confessed to be attended with so many difficulties, which, after the labour and study of near 1400 years, is so unconceivable in itself, and was at first so obscurely revealed; much less can I suppose this notion of the Son of God could be made a necessary and fundamental article in those dawnings of the gospel-day. Besides,



3. There have been some very pious and learned men in several ages, who have acknowledged *Christ's* true godhead, and yet have supposed that the sonship of *Christ* referred rather to his human nature, or to his office of *Messiah*, than to such an eternal generation and consubstantial sonship: And there are some in our age who have given sufficient proofs of their good learning and sincere piety, who heartily believe the eternal godhead of *Christ*, and yet doubt or disbelieve this eternal generation and derivation of his person, as God, and I will never pronounce an anathema upon them.

Objection I. But some will say, "If the name Son of God doth not signify eternal generation by the Father in the sameness of the divine essence or substance, yet surely it must at least import *Christ's* true and eternal godhead."

Answer I. This name son and sons of God is often used in the bible, and applied variously to men and to angels as well as to *Christ*: but it is never used in any one place to signify true and eternal godhead that I can find, unless it be in those very places which are at present under debate. And therefore when *Christ* is called eminently and absolutely the Son of God, the meaning of it does not necessarily rise higher than that he is the most eminent of all other beings, men or angels, that are called sons of God, without a certain determination whether he be true God, or no, by the mere use of that name.

Answer II. This name Son of God cannot necessarily signify his true godhead any otherwise, than by supposing it primarily to signify his consubstantial sonship, or that he is a Son of the same nature and essence with the Father, even as a Son among men has the same specific essence with his Father, and then consequentially that the Son of God is true God, because his Father is so. Now, we have before proved, that this name cannot necessarily signify his consubstantial or consubstantial sonship, and therefore it cannot necessarily signify his true godhead.

Answer III. It is evident from some parts of the conduct of *Peter* and other disciples during the life of *Christ* on earth, that they did not heartily believe they had the true and eternal God among them, and that their master was the true and eternal God, as when they rebuked him, when they questioned his knowledge in some things, when they wondered, and were so astonished at his working miracles, &c. as I shall shew hereafter: Yet it is plain that they then believed him to be the Son of God; for this was made necessary to their salvation in that day, and they professed this belief roundly, that he was the Son of God. Therefore this name does not certainly declare his divine nature.

Objection II. It will be said then, how comes it to pass, that when the high priest asked our Saviour, "Art thou the *Christ*, the Son of the blessed? And *Jesus* answered, I am," *Mark* xiv. 61, 62, in verse 64. he charges our Saviour with blasphemy, if his calling himself the Son of God did not imply his true godhead?

Answer. It is evident that the design of the wicked *jews* was to fix the highest and most criminal charge they could against him: But there was no sufficient foundation for this charge, which our Saviour in another place fully proves, *John* x. 33, 34. as I have shewn elsewhere, in what follows. Thus it appears, that though it be fully agreed that *Jesus Christ*, the Son of God, has true godhead belonging to him, because divine names and titles are given him, yet this name Son of God does not necessarily and certainly discover or imply it. Thus much for the first supposed sense of this name.

II. Some may suppose the name Son of God relates to his human soul, and signifies the glorious peculiar derivation of it from God the Father before the creation

creation of the world, and that in this sense he is called the first-born of every creature, and the beginning of the creation of God, *Col. i. 15.* and *Rev. iii. 14.*

Answer. Though I am very much inclined to believe that *Christ* is in this sense the Son of God, and that his human soul had such a glorious derivation from the Father before the creation of the world, and that he is the first-born of every creature and the beginning of the creation of God, as in *Col. i. 15.* and that his human soul had as noble a pre-eminence above other souls in it's origin, as his human body had a pre-eminence above other bodies; that so in all things he might have the pre-eminence, *Col. i. 18.* Yet I cannot think this precise idea is the very thing designed in those texts of scripture, wherein our salvation is made to depend on the belief of *Christ* being the Son of God; for,

1. Though the apostles *Paul* and *John*, and perhaps the rest of them, arrived at this complete idea of his glorious pre-existent human soul in due time, yet it doth not appear evidently that the disciples had all attained such an idea so soon as they believed that he was the Son of God, in a sufficient manner for their attaining the favour of God and a state of salvation\*.

2. There have been thousands of christians in several ages of the church who have been saved, and yet have not entertained this opinion concerning the soul of *Christ*, that it had a being before the world was created, and that it was the first-born of all the creatures of God; and therefore this cannot be the sense of that title in those texts.

III. I say therefore, in the third place, that this title, Son of God, is given to *Christ*, sometimes upon account of his incarnation and miraculous birth. *Luke i. 31, 32.* "Thou shalt bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name *Jesus*: he shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the highest." Verse 35. "The holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called THE SON OF GOD."

Though God be the Father of all men by creation, and the Father of all the saints by a new creation or regeneration, yet in a more especial manner he is the Father of the blessed *Jesus*; because his body was so formed or begotten by him, in so peculiar a manner, as no other man ever was.

But this cannot be the chief meaning of the name Son of God in the texts before cited: For surely the belief that the man *Christ Jesus* was begotten of God and born of a virgin without an earthly father, was not made the term of salvation any where that we can find in the new testament. It is not this sort of sonship that *Christ* and the apostles lay so great a stress on, nor make the matter of their sermons, and the labour of their arguments, to convince the world of it in order to their salvation. This circumstance of his extraordinary birth, doth not seem to have any such special connexion with the redemption and salvation of men, as to have it made the peculiar matter of their faith and the very article on which their salvation was to depend.

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Doubt-

\* I will not deny but that one considerable ground on which *Christ* was called the Son of God, at first, and for which he eminently merited that name, was the dignity of his human soul both in the native excellencies of it, and in the original and early generation, or peculiar way of creation of it before all other creatures: But as the belief of his being the Son of God, is made a requisite to salvation, I suppose the idea of that title Son of God, arises no higher than to mean in general some glorious relation to God, partly natural, and partly oeconomical, without a precise determination how far this relation, reached, as will appear more particularly afterward.



Doubtless many a poor creature might become a true believer in *Christ* when he was upon earth, by the sight of his miracles, and hearing his doctrine, without the knowledge of this particular circumstance of his incarnation or birth; and doubtless many a one was converted by the apostles without any notice of this part of the history of *Christ*; for we scarce find so much as the mention of it in their preaching or writings. This therefore cannot be the meaning of this name, in those scriptures.

IV. In the fourth place, *Christ* may be sometimes called the Son of God, because of his resurrection from the dead, and his exaltation to universal dominion, by the peculiar favour and power of God. In this sense *Christ* is said to be begotten of God when he is raised from the dead, *Acts* xiii. 32, 33. "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto their children, in that he hath raised up *Jesus* again; as it is also written in the second *Psal*m, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." And it is upon this account that he is called the first-begotten of the dead, *Rev.* i. 5. and the first-born from the dead, *Col.* i. 18. though the greek word is in both places the same, viz. *πρωτόγονος* ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, because he was raised immediately by God himself from the earth into eternal life.

His exaltation to the kingdom as heir of all things, is supposed to be a farther ground of this title. *Heb.* i. 2. "His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things." *Psal.* lxxxix. 27. "I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth." And some divines are ready to think, it is in this sense he is called the first-born of every creature, *Col.* i. 15. because he is heir and Lord of all the creation. And some join his exaltation together with his resurrection in that prophecy, *Psal.* ii. 7. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee;" because it is the chief sense in which the words of the second or of the eighty ninth *Psal*m, now cited, could literally be applied to *David* in the day of his being raised from the earth and obscurity, unto a throne: Now *David* in this his exaltation to the kingdom of *Israel* was a type of *Christ*, and was said to be the Son of God begotten that day, as a proper type and figure of our blessed Saviour.

But whatever may be the prophetic sense of those words of the psalmist, it is certain that the name Son of God cannot directly and chiefly signify his resurrection and future exaltation in all those places of the gospels, where the belief of it is made the term of salvation.

1. Because he is very often called the Son of God, long before his death, resurrection, and exaltation, to describe the person who was to be thus raised and exalted. He is called by the apostle *John*, the only begotten of the Father, who lay in the bosom of the Father, *John* i. 14, 18. and *Paul* calls him God's own Son, who was delivered up to death for us, *Rom.* viii. 32. as a name that belonged to him long before his death, or indeed before his birth into this world: For when he was first sent into the world he was then the Son of God, *John* iii. 16, 17. and xi. 27. and as such he was appointed the heir of all things, *Heb.* i. 2.

2. This title the Son of God in those texts of the gospel does not depend upon his resurrection and exaltation, because the jews were required to believe him to be the Son of God long before his death and resurrection. Nor did *Christ* himself in plain language openly and publicly preach his own death and resurrection to the multitudes. Therefore the belief of *Christ* to be the Son of God in this sense of the words could not in his life-time be made necessary to salvation.

3. And

3. And let it be noted further, that at this time even the apostles themselves, who were true believers in the Son of God did not know that he was to die and to rise again, for *Peter* began to rebuke him, when he spoke of his own dying, *Mark* viii. 32. "And they knew not what rising from the dead should mean." *Mark* ix. 10. yet they all believed him to be the Son of God.

4. I might add, that it is abundantly evident from scripture that he was the Son of God, before he died or rose again, because he was only proclaimed or declared to be his Son by his resurrection and exaltation: The apostle *Paul* explains it thus, *Rom.* i. 4. "He was declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead."

Nor is it any wonder that *Christ* in some scriptures should be represented as born or begotten of God at his resurrection, since it is the way of the sacred writers sometimes to represent a thing to be transacted or done in that day when it is published or proclaimed; and upon this account *Christ* may be said to be born or to be begotten, or to be made the first born of God, in the day of his resurrection and exaltation, because he was then proclaimed and published to be the Son of God; even as a king may be said to be made that day when he is proclaimed or crowned.

V. The last sense in which *Christ* is called the Son of God, is to signify that "glorious person who was appointed to be the *Messiah*, the anointed Saviour who was derived from God, and did bear some very near and extraordinary relation to God above all other persons; and therefore he is called his Son, his own Son, his only begotten Son, his beloved Son." And since the several other senses cannot be admitted to be the precise idea and common meaning of the name Son of God in the new testament, I take this to be the true idea of it, as it is generally used in the new testament, and especially in those scriptures where the belief or profession of it is made necessary in order to the salvation of men in the writings of the apostles.

It includes some special and glorious relation to God; but whether that relation belongs to his flesh, or his human soul, or his divine nature, or to all these, is not so directly determined in those texts, because the chief design of them is but to point out the person and character of the *Messiah*.

Now let us consider the reasons to prove this to be the true sense of the name.

That the name Son of God doth originally respect the glory and excellency of his person, and his near relation and resemblance to God, appears from the use of the word Son and Son of God in other places of scripture.

Son or daughter or child in the *hebrew* tongue implies eminently two things. 1. It notes some derivation of one thing from another. Men are frequently called sons of men. *Israelites* are called the sons or children of *Israel*. So sparks are called the sons of the burning coal, *Job* v. 7. to signify the derivation of one from the other.

2. It is also an idiom of the *hebrew* language, and a peculiar way of speaking much in use among the *jews*, to call one person the son of any other thing or person whose quality and likeness he bears. So wicked men are called the sons of *Belial*, or wickedness, *2 Sam.* xxiii. 6. So young men that were instructed and prepared for the gift of prophecy are called the sons of the prophets, *2 Kings* ii. 3, 5, 7. Proud men are named the children of pride, *Job* xli. 34. Child of the devil, signifies a very wicked man, one a-kin to the devil in malice and subtilty, &c. *Acts* xiii. 10. So the word

sons



sons of God signifies persons who in a peculiar manner were derived from God, and had some resemblance of him.

*Adam* was called the son of God, *Luke* iii. 38. because he was formed in the image of God, and in an immediate manner derived his being from God without human generation.

Angels are called sons of God, *Job* i. 6. and ii. 1. and xxxviii. 7. because they are glorious and excellent beings, with spiritual powers and perfections, in some measure like to God, and were the chief rank of his creatures, and not derived from each other by successive generations, but all created immediately by God himself.

Saints are called sons of God in *John* i. 12. and many other places, both because they are like God, or created a-new after his image in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, *Col.* iii. 10. *Eph.* iv. 24. and because they are said to be new created, or begotten and born of God, *John* i. 13. and 1 *John* v. 1.

Magistrates are called gods, and sons of the most high, *Psal.* lxxxii. 6. partly to denote that they are raised by God to that dignity; so *David* in the letter and type was the son of God, *Psal.* ii. 7. and was made God's first-born, *Psal.* lxxxix. 26, 27. as a type of *Christ*; and partly also to denote that in their authority and majesty they resemble God the supreme magistrate and ruler.

The Son of God who was with the three children in the fiery furnace, *Dan.* iii. 25: is so called, to signify a glorious and excellent being, that had something divine or god-like in him; for this is the expression of *Nebuchadnezzar*, who is not supposed to know any thing of *Christ* or the *Messiah*.

Now it is evident that our Lord *Jesus Christ* is the Son of God, in a sense superior to men and angels, for he is called God's own Son, *Rom.* viii. 32. his only begotten Son, *John* i. 14, 18. and his first-born, the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature, &c. *Col.* i. 15, 16. "The brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, made so much better than angels, and has obtained a more excellent name than they," *Heb.* i. 4. "For in all things he must have the pre-eminence," *Col.* i. 18. These scriptural expressions plainly imply both derivation and resemblance.

Yet here I ask leave to insert one caution, and that is, though it is sufficiently manifest from the new testament, and especially from *Heb.* i. that *Christ* is the Son of God in a sense far superior to angels, yet I am in doubt whether the disciples at first could have such an idea of his superiority to all angels: Perhaps their idea of the Son of God arose no higher at first than to suppose him superior to all their prophets and kings, who were called sons of God, though afterwards it grew up to an idea superior to all the angels of God.

But let us raise this idea of the name as high as we can suppose any of the disciples had attained before the death of *Christ*, or as high as could be requisite in order to salvation in that day, and I think it must be granted that this name Son of God, so far as it denotes the nature of *Christ* distinct from his offices, can necessarily be construed to rise no higher than to denote some peculiar and glorious likeness to God, some more near and excellent relation to God the Father, or some special derivation from him, some divine character more eminent than belongs to men or angels when they are called the sons of God, without any precise determination wherein this peculiar relation to God consisted.

Now to proceed :

This glory and excellency of the person of *Christ*, which is originally denoted by the name Son of God, is part of his qualification for the office of the *Messiah*, part of the foundation of his office, and what made him a proper person to undertake, sustain and fulfil it.

Yet this excellency of his person, this likeness and nearness to God, is not the complete sense and meaning of the word Son of God in those forecited texts of the gospel; but it includes also a designation to his office, viz. that glorious person of extraordinary nearness and likeness to God, who was ordained to be the Saviour of men: And though the name Son of God signifies and includes both these, yet sometimes the scripture in using this name seems to have a more special regard to the excellency of his person, and sometimes to his office, and perhaps for this reason, that a belief of his sonship in one of those senses, but especially the latter, in that day might be a sufficient ground for the faith and hope of sinners.

1. It may seem to have some special regard to the excellency of his person, where it is joined by way of exposition to the word *Messiah* or *Christ*, as a further description of the person who sustained that office; as in these scriptures, viz. *Matt.* xxvi. 63. the high-priest adjured *Jesus* to a confession, and said, "Tell us whether thou be the *Christ*, the Son of God?" *Matt.* xvi. 16. "Peter answered and said, Thou art *Christ*, or *Messiah*, the Son of the living God." *John* xi. 27. "Martha confessed, Lord, I believe that thou art the *Christ*, the Son of God." Which expressions mean thus much, thou art the *Christ* or *Messiah*, that glorious person of peculiar relation to God who was ordained to this office.

It seems also to signify more specially the excellency of his person in those scriptures where he is called God's own Son, God's only son, God's only begotten Son, his beloved Son, his first-born, &c. because these are words of relation and peculiar indearment, and we cannot well say the only-begotten *Messiah*, the first-born *Messiah*.

2. Yet there are many other places wherein the name Son of God seems to have a more special regard to his office as the appointed Saviour, though it is inclusive also of the peculiar excellency of his person, which makes him fit for his office. *John* x. 37. "Do you say of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?" His being thus sanctified and sent by the Father is sufficient to give this name.

This is evident also where the word *Christ* or *Messiah* is not joined with it, and yet the design of the expression seems to be entirely the same as if the word *Christ* or *Messiah* had been used there; as *John* i. 34. "John the baptist saw and bare witness that this is the Son of God," that is, this is the great promised Saviour. So verse 49. "Nathanael said, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of *Israel*," that is, thou art the *Messiah*, the king. So *John* ix. 35. *Jesus* asked the blind man who was healed, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" that is, dost thou believe on the *Messiah*, the appointed Saviour? For as such he was the proper object of belief. So 1 *John* iv. 15. "Whoso shall confess that *Jesus* is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God," that is, he that confesses him to be the glorious appointed *Messiah*, and receives him as such, he dwelleth in or with God. The same is the sense of that word, 1 *John* v. 5. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that *Jesus* is the Son of God," that is, the *Messiah*. And verse 20. "We know the Son of God is come;" that is, the glorious person who was ordained to be the *Messiah* is come into the world.



As in these places where the word *Christ* or *Messiah* is not mentioned, Son of God signifies more directly the *Messiah* or appointed Saviour, so there are other places wherein the word *Christ* is joined with it, where Son of God hath the same signification, and intends chiefly the office of the *Messiah* or Saviour; because in those texts the word *Christ* doth not properly signify a character or office, but the proper name or surname of the man *Jesus*, who was generally so called after his resurrection\*. The eunuch's confession must have this sense, *Acts* viii. 37. "I believe that *Jesus Christ* is the Son of God." that is, this man named *Jesus Christ* is the promised and appointed Saviour.

And in this same sense did St. Paul "preach *Christ* in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God," *Acts* ix. 20. that is, that the man *Jesus Christ* is the promised Saviour. For the grand question of that day was not whether *Jesus* were eternally begotten of the Father, nor whether he was the true and eternal God himself, nor whether he were formed in an extraordinary and miraculous manner as to his soul or his body, but whether he was the promised *Messiah* and Saviour of the world?

And if we consult the writings of the new testament, especially the gospel and epistles of St. John, we shall find the name Son of God, and the name *Christ*, which in *hebrew* is *Messiah*, used very promiscuously for one another, and sometimes with a design to explain each other, and both to denote the great promised redeemer, the Saviour of the world. This will appear, if we read the following verses, *John* xi. 27. *Martha* confesses, "I believe that thou art the *Christ*, the Son of God, which should come into the world." *1 John* iv. 14, 15. "And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that *Jesus* is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." *1 John* v. 1. "Whosoever believeth that *Jesus* is the *Christ*, is born of God." And a little after, "He that is born of God overcometh the world." And then, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that *Jesus* is the Son of God?" *1 John* ii. 22. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that *Jesus* is the *Christ*? He is anti-christ that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." And that awful text, *John* viii. 24. is certainly to be interpreted the same way, "If ye believe not that I AM HE, ye shall die in your sins;" that is, as *Christ* himself explains it in the next verse, that I am "the same that I said unto you from the beginning;" that is, the *Christ*, the *Messiah*, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. Nor is the absence of the word HE in the *greek* any bar to this interpretation, for the expression is the same, *John* iv. 29. *ἐγώ εἰμι*, and *John* ix. 37. *ἐγώ εἰμι*, where we are sure that *Christ* means that he is the *Messiah*.

It is well known that the *jews* generally, and very justly, believed the person who was to be their *Messiah* and Saviour was to bear some very extraordinary relation to God, and to be his Son in a sublime and uncommon way and manner, though what particular sort of sonship it was, they could have but very dark and confused ideas; yet they used the word Son of God emphatically to denote this glorious person: And the common purpose for which they used it, was to signify this great promised deliverer.

Now

\* This is a common thing in our nation and language, where the surname of a man and of his family is *Smith*, *Taylor*, *Clark*, *Dyer*, *Steward*, &c. being drawn originally from the trade, office or employment which perhaps the first of the family enjoyed or practised.

Now it is very easy to account for this, viz. that the Son of God, which originally signifies a glorious person near akin to God, might in common use come to signify his office, or the appointed king and Saviour of his people, just as the name *Cæsar* was originally the surname of a family, but afterwards came to signify an office, and to denote the emperor: and perhaps the same might be said of the name *Abimelech* king of *Philistia*, or *Pbaraob* king of *Egypt*. So the word *Israel* at first was a name given to *Jacob*, thence it was derived to signify all the *jewish* family or nation, and afterwards it came to signify the character of that family, viz. the church of God; and so it is used in *Gal. vi. 16.* "Peace be on the *Israel* of God."

Thus I have gone over the several senses of the name Son of God, and there is the greatest reason to believe that it most usually and directly signifies that person who has in general some peculiar and sublime relation and likeness to God, and is appointed to be the *Messiah* or Saviour of men.

## S E C T I O N II.

*Other arguments to confirm this sense of the name SON OF GOD.*

THE next argument I shall produce for this sense of the name, is this: It is most reasonable to suppose that Son of God signifies the office of the *Messiah*, together with a connotation of his peculiar relation to God, or his being born of God in some eminent and transcendent manner, because the other name of *Christ* son of man signifies the same office of the *Messiah*, together with a connotation of his being born of mankind, or his relation to man in some way of eminence.

That the name son of man may properly denote the *Messiah*, there are some hints given in the old testament. I will mention four places.

I. The very first promise of the *Messiah* calls him the "seed of the woman, who was appointed to break the head of the serpent," *Gen. iii. 15.* that is, one derived from mankind, or a son of man; which is interpreted, 1 *John iii. 8.* "The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil." The *Messiah* was to be the Son of God and the son of man, to undertake this glorious service.

II. See *Psalms viii. 4.* "What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, &c." which is interpreted concerning *Jesus* the promised *Messiah*, *Heb. ii. 9.* and so the literal and typical sense of the psalmist is this: What is the first *Adam*, with all his seed, that thou art mindful of him? Or what is the second *Adam* that thou visitest him? &c. since he is made a little lower than the angels by his coming into the flesh, and becoming a second *Adam*.

III. Read *Psalms lxxx. 17.* "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself." Whether this refers to the hard work of atonement, which the hand of God would lay upon him, or whether it means the hand of God shall be with him, to support and establish him in his kingdom, may be doubted: Yet it is generally agreed, that the person here designed, is the promised *Messiah*, that holy, that mighty one, upon whom God devolved the care of our salvation, *Psalms lxxxix. 19.* when he says, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen out of the people;" that is, one who is to be eminently the son of man, chosen out of mankind.

IV. Look into *Dan. vii. 13.* "I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days,—



and there was given to him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, &c." which represents in prophecy, *Christ's* ascension to heaven in the clouds, and his receiving the kingdom from the hands of the Father.

I grant that in some of these ancient texts, the design of scripture is to represent this, that the promised *Messiah* was to have the nature, form and fashion of a man, but still his character as *Messiah* is also included or declared in the same text. And this is particularly remarkable in this verse of *Daniel*, which, as doctor *Sykes* has abundantly shewn in his "Essay on the truth of the christian religion," is always supposed to be in view wheresoever this title is given to *Christ* in the new testament.

This is the name indeed, whereby *Christ* most frequently speaks of himself in the new testament, and, as some have remarked, that as the sacred writers generally call him the Son of God to express his sublime relation to the Father, so he generally calls himself the son of man, to signify his condescending relation to mankind.

It may be said concerning this name son of man as is said before concerning the name Son of God, viz. As there are some few places where the Son of God, chiefly denotes his sublime relation to God distinct from his office; so there may be a place or two where the son of man chiefly signifies *Christ's* relation to human nature, and his derivation from mankind, distinct from his office. Yet as the most general sense of the word Son of God is to denote that eminent that peculiar Son of God who was to be the *Messiah*, or Saviour; so the most general sense of the word son of man is to denote that eminent and peculiar son of man who was the seed of the woman, and was appointed to that office of a Saviour.

First, I shall mention one text, for I can think of but one in the new testament, where the son of man may be supposed chiefly or only to signify *Christ's* relation to mankind, without including his office or referring to it.

*Matth.* xvi. 13. "Whom do men say that I, the son of man, am?" that is, Whom do men say that I *Jesus* am, who appear in the common form of mankind? and verse 16. *Peter* gave his opinion, "Thou art *Christ* the Son of the living God;" that is, Thou art the *Messiah*, who hast a sublime and glorious relation to God, who art by way of eminence God's own Son.

Yet even this text may be also explained so as to include the *Messiahship*, or the office of *Christ* thus, "Whom do men say that I am? What do men think concerning me, who am indeed the great son of man, the *Messiah* who was to come?" What do they think of my person, who am the *Messiah* by office?

But in the next place let it be observed, that there are a multitude of scriptures wherein this word is plainly and certainly used to signify that eminent son of man, who is the promised *Messiah*. I shall mention only these four, wherein it is evident that the scripture hath chief respect to his office; and where the mere signification of his human nature cannot answer the end and design of the text.

I. *Mark* ix. 12. "*Elias* verily cometh first and restoreth all things, &c. And it is written of the son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought;" which refers to the prophecies of *Isaiab*, *David* and *Daniel* concerning the *Messiah*, *Isa.* liii. *Dan.* ix. and *Psal.* xxii.

II. *Luke* xvii. 22. "The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the son of man, and ye shall not see it; and they shall say to you, See here, or see there; Go not after them, nor follow them." Which is parallel to *Matth.* xxiv. 23. "If any man shall say to you, Lo here is *Christ*, or there, believe it not; for

for there shall arise false *Christs*, &c." Then it follows both in *Luke* and *Matthew*, "As the lightening cometh, &c. so shall the coming of the son of man be; and as it was in the days of *Noah*, and, *Luke* adds also, in the days of *Lot*, thus shall it be in the day when the son of man is revealed:" that is, when *Jesus* shall appear as the *Messiah* for the conversion of the gentiles, or for the destruction of the *jews*, or for the final judgment of the world.

III. *John* v. 26, 27. "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the son of man:" that is, because he is the *Messiah*; therefore, in order to sustain and fulfil the character of *Messiah*, it was necessary that he should have power to give life to the dead, and to execute judgment on the world.

IV. *John* xii. 34. "The people answered him, We have heard out of the law, that *Christ*, or the *Messiah*, abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The son of man must be lifted up? Who is this son of man?" It is as much as if the people had said, "We know of no son of man besides that *Messiah* or the *Christ*, who is to have a glorious kingdom, and abide for ever: What other son of man is there, or can there be, that must be lifted up or put to death? Is there any other *Christ* or *Messiah* besides him who is to abide for ever?"

I might cite several scriptures more to this purpose, but these are sufficient to shew, that as the *Messiah* is sometimes called the SON OF MAN, to signify his office with a connotation of his relation to mankind, and being in an eminent sense the seed of the woman, or the son of man, the chief of all the sons of men; so it is exceeding probable that he is also called the SON OF GOD, to signify the same office, and withal to shew his sublime relation to God, or his being in a peculiar and transcendent manner THE SON, by way of absolute eminence, above all men or angels who are sons of God; even his first-born, his only begotten Son.

Objection. But if it be allowed, that there are any places of scripture where the name son of man denotes the human nature of *Christ*, or that he was really and truly man, why may not the name Son of God as well signify his divine nature, and denote that he is true and real God?

To which I answer, that the case is widely different; for the name son of man is never applied to any person who is not true and real man; and the scripture applying it absolutely and eminently to *Christ*, shews him to be the chief of the sons of men: But the name Son of God is applied often in the old testament, and in the new, both to angels and to men, who are called the sons of God, and yet they are not true and real God; and therefore when this name is given absolutely and eminently to *Christ*, it can necessarily be construed to signify no more, than the most eminent and chief of all who are called the sons of God, or one who is above them all, in character and office.

It may be observed also, that the name son of man or sons of men is given sometimes to any of the children of *Adam* or the race of mankind, and at other times to some eminent person among men, as *Ezekiel* the prophet is often spoken to, "Thou son of man;" but the name is much more abundantly attributed to our blessed Saviour, as he is the most eminent of all that ever had that appellation given them.

I acknowledge it is a great truth, that this glorious person the *Messiah* hath two distinct natures united in him, even the nature of God and the nature of man; and that *Christ* is true God and true man. But when he calls himself Son of God and son of man, surely an eternal and consubstantial sonship of *Christ*, or even his



eternal deity united to man, seems more than could be certainly collected from these names in that day, and more than *Christ* himself directly designed by the use of those words.

The last argument that I shall mention to prove that the name Son of God denotes the character of the *Messiah*, including also his divine original and sublime relation to God which renders him an all-sufficient Saviour, is this, that salvation is annexed to the belief of *Jesus* being the Son of God, in several texts which I have cited at the beginning of this discourse: This sonship therefore must necessarily signify and carry with it some ideas, or characters that are directly suited to the sinful and miserable state of mankind, and that render him a proper object for their desire, dependence and hope.

Now it is not the mere belief of his having a divine nature, nor of an eternal generation by God the Father, nor of his having a most glorious human soul, nor a miraculous birth, nor a resurrection from the dead, that renders him so directly suitable to the state and case of convinced sinners, and fit for the proper exercises of their hope and dependence, as the various offices and characters which he sustains as the *Messiah*, the Saviour of mankind, together with his all-sufficient capacity to fulfil those offices.

A poor convinced perishing sinner beholds him as a glorious person near to God, appointed to be a prophet to enlighten his darkness, a priest to atone for his sins and intercede for him, a king to rule and influence and defend him against all the powers of sin and hell, and all-sufficient for these sacred purposes: And thence I infer, that a divine person who is the promised *Messiah*, the all-sufficient Saviour, is the most natural and probable sense of this title, the SON OF GOD, in all those places of scripture where *Christ* is proposed to our faith under this name; however some of the other senses may be more remotely and indeterminately included therein. And though the deity of *Christ* is not directly signified by this name, yet by a comparison of it with other places of scripture, I think it may certainly be deduced by just consequences; for it is sufficiently manifest to us, who have the whole new testament to compare with the old, that the *Messiah* must be the true God, or that godhead must be united to human nature, to make up the complete person and character of the *Messiah*.

### S E C T I O N III.

#### *Objections against this sense of the name answered.*

Objection I. **T**HE word son among men properly signifies one of the same nature with the father; and therefore Son of God, when it is applied to *Christ*, must signify one of the same nature with God the Father, that is, one who is true and eternal God; and it has been generally so taken in this controversy by our divines. Now this sense implies much more than a mere likeness to God, or a derivation from him, or deputation to an office.

Answer I. The word son taken in it's common senses and uses among men may be applied to several ideas, viz. a derivation from the father, a likeness to, or imitation of the father, a subordination, or some sort of inferior relation to the father, or a being of the same species, kind or nature with the father, and an individual being distinct from the father.

Now

Now it is plain that when human words and similes are used to represent divine things, there is no necessity that those words should include all their original ideas, nor indeed is it possible: It is enough to support the analogy, if but one or two of the same ideas are denoted by the use of the same word. Why may we not then suppose that the name Son of God, when applied to *Christ*, may signify his peculiar derivation from the Father as to his soul, or as to his body, or his subordinate character in his mission by the Father, or his being appointed by the Father to be his vicegerent in the kingdom, or his likeness to the Father in his natural qualifications and powers, or in his kingly office, together with his being another individual distinct from the Father? Why may not one or two of these ideas, and much more all of them, be sufficient to account for the use of this name Son of God, without making it necessary that the word sonship in this place must include a sameness of nature?

Besides, it is evident that the word son of God is applied to angels, *Job* i. 6. and to men, *Phil.* ii. 15. 1 *John* iii. 1, 2. and even the term of begotten son is applied to men, 1 *John* v. 1. Yet neither men nor angels are of the same kind or nature with God their Father, and in these instances it is impossible that the idea of sameness of kind or nature should be included.

Answer II. The word son in the language of men, wheresoever it means a sameness of nature, it always means the same specific nature, or a nature of the same kind and species; but it never means the same individual nature, for it always denotes a distinct individual being. Therefore, in order to keep this part of the idea of sonship, and to maintain the parallel in this point, if we will have the Son of God to signify one of the same nature with the Father, it must mean one of the same specific nature, that is, a distinct individual being of the same kind with the Father; and thus we shall be in danger of making two Gods\*. But it is plain, that in order to support the analogy of the name Son, we can never make the word Son of God to signify one of the same individual nature or essence, because it never signifies so in the language of men; and therefore there is no necessity that it should signify one of the same nature in any sense when applied to *Christ*.

Answer III. There are many places of scripture wherein *Christ* is called the Son of God, and the Son absolutely, and where God is said to be his Father, wherein we cannot suppose the godhead of *Christ* is or can be designed in the most just and natural interpretation of the text; such as are most of these which follow, viz.

*John* v. 18, 19. When the *jews* had made a strange inference, and charged *Christ* with making "himself equal to God, because he called God his Father, he answered, verily, verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do, &c." This is not an expression which represents the Son as the true and eternal God, or that grants their inference; for it is plain that this expression represents him under a degree of impotence and dependence, that he could do nothing of him-

\* That it cannot mean one of the same specific nature, and that *Christ* is not another individual spirit specifically the same with the Father, I have proved at large in other places: For it belongs to the very nature of the Father to be self-existent and underived, and it belongs as much to the nature of a Son not to be self-existent, but to be derived: therefore their natures cannot be specifically the same. A nature which is not self-existent and self-sufficient, nor could exist but by derivation, is not the same specific nature with that which is self-sufficient and self-existent, and which cannot be derived.



himself. Nay this contradicts their inference, and denies his equality with God, rather than confirms or allows it.

The sense of this expression may be learned from *John* viii. 38. "I speak that which I have seen with my Father, and you do that which you have seen with your father." Verse 44. "Ye are of your father the devil, &c." — Now it is plain that the *jews* had never seen the devil do those things which they did, but it signifies only that by the devil's influence and direction they practised evil actions: And so also, that *Christ* doth all by God's influence and direction, is the plain meaning of *Christ's* speaking or doing what he has seen with his Father.

Nor will the following words destroy this interpretation, "Whatsoever things the Father doth, these also doth the Son likewise;" that is, whatsoever things the Father contrives and appoints, the Son executes and performs as commissioned by the Father, or the Son performs them by the Father's influence.

Then it proceeds, verse 20. "The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doth, and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel." Hence it follows that the Father had not then shewn to the Son these greater works, or given him commission and power for the performance of them. But this can never be said concerning the divine nature of *Christ*, which can receive and learn nothing new.

And though there are some expressions in that paragraph of scripture down to the 30th verse, which seem superior to the character of any mere creature, and which would have been hardly applied to *Christ* the man, if not united to godhead; yet *Christ* considered as the Son of God throughout that paragraph, is represented as dependent on the Father for all, and receiving all from the Father, which is hardly consistent with the idea of supreme godhead, if that were included in sonship.

Wheresoever *Christ* calls God his Father, he himself stands under the special character of a Son. Now *John* v. 30. when he says, "I can of myself do nothing, I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." And *John* vi. 38. "I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me;" that is, the Father, as verse 39. This does not sound like the language of godhead, which is supreme and independent, and can do all things of itself, and by it's own will.

*John* xiv. 28. "My Father is greater than I." It is hardly to be supposed that *Christ* here intends to speak of his divine nature. The expression itself, as well as the context, would lead one to think that *Christ* considered as a Son is not here spoken of as the true and eternal God, who is the greatest of beings, and can acknowledge no greater than himself.

*John* xiv. 31. "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." This does not seem to be the language of supreme godhead, which receives no commandments from another.

*John* xvii. 5. "Father, glorify me with thyself, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Surely *Christ* as God does not offer up prayers to the Father, and much less could he pray for the restoration of a glory which his divine nature once had, of which he seems divested at present. All this is hardly consistent with supreme deity belonging to his sonship, that is, either to be divested of glory, or to pray for the restoration of it.

*John* xx. 17. *Christ* says, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." So 2 *Cor.* xi. 31. and 1 *Pet.* i. 3. "the Father is called the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*." Now the Father cannot properly be the God of

of the deity of *Christ*, that is, his Creator, his absolute governor, and his object of worship, which is the proper sense of my God in all other scriptures. Nor is there any sufficient reason then why we should construe the words my Father, as relating to the deity of *Christ*, since the words my God cannot be so construed, and since both these titles seem so intimately connected and referring to one and the same subject.

*Mark* xiii. 32. "Of that day and hour knoweth not the Son, but the Father." I confess it may be said in that paragraph he is called the Son of man, verse 26. yet it must be granted that the more natural sense of the words is, "Of that hour knoweth not the Son of God, but only God the Father." This text does so plainly shew *Christ*'s ignorance of the day of judgment as he is the Son, that though it be granted the divine nature of *Christ* knows the day of judgment, yet as a Son he does not: therefore as a Son he hath not a divine nature, or true godhead.

*John* iii. 35. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands." Verse 34. "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." All this implies an inferiority and dependency. As a Son he receives all from another, which godhead cannot do.

*Luke* xxiii. 47. When the centurion or captain saw the miracles at the death of *Christ*, he cried out, "Verily this man was the Son of God." He cannot be supposed to mean that this man was the true and eternal God, but only that he was a great and glorious person, like God, or some way related to God: or he was the person whom the jews expected for their *Messiah*. This roman captain could not imagine *Christ* to be God himself.

*1 Cor.* xv. 28. "Then shall the Son also himself be subject to him that has put all things under him, that God may be all in all." This is a character of too much inferiority for true godhead. The argument stands thus: If the Son of God be true God considered as a Son, then he is originally and necessarily Lord of all, and then it must be said it is by his own voluntary condescension that he is so far depressed and humbled by the oeconomy, as to become the Father's deputy and vicegerent; and when that oeconomy ceases, he is of course exalted to his equality with the Father, and to his essential and natural lordship over all. But the representation of St. *Paul* is just the contrary: In many parts of his writings, particularly *Phil.* ii. he shews us, that the Son of God is not depressed but exalted by the oeconomy to the kingdom. And he tell us in this text, that when the Son gives up this oeconomical kingdom, he comes again into subjection; then shall the Son himself be subject to the Father; which plainly shews, that considered as a Son, he is naturally subject to the Father, and that at the end of this oeconomical exaltation he shall return to his natural subjection, and shall be so for ever when God appears all in all. This is most evidently the meaning of the great apostle.

This text will not prove that *Christ* is not God, for he is so by personal union to the divine nature, he is God manifest in the flesh, he is God and man in one complex person. But this text, I think, does prove that his sonship doth not include godhead. And not only in this text, but in most or all these scriptures it is manifest, that the character of *Christ* as a Son is set far below the Father, not only in order or in office, but in knowledge, power, sovereignty, self-sufficiency and authority, which would naturally lead one to believe that his sonship in scripture cannot refer to his godhead or divine nature, wherein he is by our greatest divines acknowledged to be equal to the Father in power and glory.

Now



Now while we maintain the true deity of *Christ*, and that his complete person is God and man united; I see no necessity of applying all these texts to his godhead where his sonship is spoken of, since his sonship may be better referred to his inferior nature, or to his offices. And this will free us from those embarrassments and hardships to which we have been driven to keep up the sublime idea of godhead in these scriptures which call him a Son, and which at the same time carry so much of dependence and inferiority in them.

Objection II. Though it should be granted that there are several texts wherein *Christ* is called the Son of God, which cannot so well be referred to his divine nature, yet there are several other texts wherein *Christ* is represented as the Son of God, begotten and born of God, which seem much more naturally to refer to his godhead, and can hardly be construed into a lower sense, viz.

Text I. *Prov.* viii. 24, 25. where wisdom says, "Before the hills was I brought forth, &c." which whole chapter is generally interpreted concerning the divine nature of *Christ*.

Answer I. It is not the design of my present discourse to prove that the divine nature of *Christ* has no sort or manner of derivation from the Father, real or relative: I neither affirm it nor deny it here. But that the name Son of God, in the new testament, does not generally, if ever, signify his divine nature; this is my present theme: And therefore the allegation of this text out of *Proverbs* is not to our present purpose, nor is the name Son of God there used, nor is God called his Father.

Answer II. I dare not deny this chapter to relate to *Christ*; yet it does not follow, that it refers only to his divine nature, as I shall shew immediately. And it must be acknowledged that it is very hard to prove, that this eighth of *Proverbs* does certainly denote the person of *Christ*. *Atanasius* himself sometimes explains it another way. Bishop *Patrick*, that noble commentator, will scarce allow it; and many others have been of the opinion, that *Solomon* means only wisdom as a principle of contrivance and counsel, whether human or divine; or at most, the ideal world in the mind of God, though he uses such sort of personal characters in his description of this wisdom, in the *hebrew* idiom.

It is granted that many of the ancients explained it of *Christ*, but some of the fathers supposed it to mean the holy Spirit; and all men know they were but very poor expositors, who dealt much in allegory, and in straining of plain texts to their purposes: and since they cannot tell whether the Son or the Spirit be meant here, it is possible it may mean neither of them, by all the arguments which they have produced; for none of them are very conclusive.

Answer III. Supposing the divine wisdom in *Prov.* viii. primarily to signify the idea of the divine counsels and decrees about creation and redemption, it may be properly said, this wisdom was begotten or brought forth before the creation, and all this system of divine counsels being deposited with the pre-existent soul of *Christ*, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, this human soul of *Christ*, thus vested with divine ideas, it may be included in *Solomon's* idea of wisdom.

And those who believe the doctrine of the pre-existent soul of *Christ*, have made it appear that if it refer to *Christ*, it is very probable this pre-existent soul considered as having the divine nature united to it, is here represented as commencing it's existence, it's union with godhead, receiving it's commission, and beginning it's office. And the  
learned

learned doctor *Thomas Goodwin*, though he firmly believed the eternal generation of *Christ*, as the Son of God, yet he supposes this chapter to relate to *Christ*, as God-man, and not merely to his godhead.

Text II. Is that remarkable one, *Psal.* ii. 7. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee;" which has been usually interpreted by our divines, to signify the eternal sonship of *Christ* as God.

Answer I. It is evident that in *Acts* xiii. 33. *St. Paul* applies this to the resurrection of *Christ*, and the beginning of his exaltation, and not to any eternal generation; so that we have a divine interpreter giving quite a different sense of it.

Answer II. Besides, *Christ* is here said to become a Son by a decree which cannot signify eternal generation, but must relate to his office.

Answer III. Again, it is spoken literally concerning the exaltation of *David* as the type of *Christ* to his kingdom, and not concerning the natural production or generation of *David*; and therefore in the antitype it must signify mystically the exaltation of *Christ* to his kingdom, and not his natural eternal generation.

Answer IV. Let it be farther remembered that the word, this day, never signifies eternity in scripture in any other place, and why then must it do so here?

Answer V. I add also, that this text is cited in *Heb.* i. 5. where it is joined with God's promise in future times to be a Father to *Christ*; "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son;" which does not signify eternal generation. But of this verse I have spoken more largely in other places; and shewn that bishop *Pearson*, doctor *Owen*, and other zealous trinitarians do not construe this text to mean the eternal generation of *Christ*.

Text III. *Matth.* xxviii. 19. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the holy Ghost." Why is the Son joined with the Father and the holy Ghost, who are confessedly divine, if the name Son does not include the godhead of *Christ*.

Answer. If *Christ*, considered as the Son of God, be personally united to the divine nature, or the eternal Word, he has godhead belonging to his complex person; and therefore the name Son, which signifies his personal character and office, may be well joined with the Father in this initiating ordinance, the whole complex person of *Christ*, who is the Son of God, including true godhead.

Text IV. *Rom.* i. 3, 4. "His Son *Jesus Christ* our Lord, which was made of the seed of *David*, according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead." Now some say, here is a plain antithesis between the human nature and divine nature of *Christ*: the human nature, which is called the flesh, and the divine nature, which is called the spirit of holiness, and according to this divine nature he is declared to be the Son of God.

Answer I. There are several critics who believe the eternal generation of *Christ*, who yet do not suppose there is such an exact antithesis here; but they construe the spirit of holiness, to signify the holy Ghost who raised *Christ* from the dead, and who manifested, testified and declared him to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection.

Answer II. There are others who chuse to support the antithesis, and make the spirit of holiness to signify the glorious human spirit of *Christ* replenished with all holiness; and suppose that the name spirit of holiness is here given to this human soul of *Christ*, not only to aggrandize it's character above all other holy creatures, but also to inti-



mate that this spirit governed the animal nature, and kept it pure, as well as to distinguish it from the holy Spirit, which is the third of the sacred three. But I am not so well satisfied in this exposition, and therefore I dare not venture to maintain it. But there is a third answer, which I prefer to both these.

Answer III. This text may be thus paraphrased: "*Jesus Christ* our Lord, who was derived from the seed of *David*, according to, his fleshly original, or, the influence of the flesh into his birth, but was declared powerfully, by his resurrection from the dead, to be the Son of God, according to, his supernatural and holy original, or, the influence of the holy Spirit." So that the flesh here, does not mean any constituent part of *Christ*, or his very flesh or body, but the operation or influence of the flesh, or share that the flesh of the blessed virgin had in the conception of *Christ*: And so the spirit does not mean any constituent part of *Christ*, but the influence or operation of the holy Spirit in his first conception, or in his resurrection, on both which accounts he is called in scripture the Son of God. See *Luke* i. 35. and *Acts* xiii. 33. and both are ascribed to the holy Spirit. There is a large confirmation of this exposition, in some notes on *Rom.* i. 3, 4. wherein it is shewn how the antithesis of the apostle is preserved, and that the apostle always uses *κατὰ σάρκα* and *κατὰ πνεῦμα* in an antithesis, to signify the influence of each principle, rather than for two constituent parts of a person.

Text V. *Heb.* vii. 3. "*Melchisedec* was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually." Now this historical eternity of *Melchisedec*, whose father and mother, life and death are not recorded, is made a type of the real eternity of *Christ*, considered as he is the Son of God.

Answer I. Since *Melchisedec* is represented here without a father, and yet as a type of the Son of God, it would destroy the doctrine of *Christ's* eternal generation from God the Father, rather than support it, since the very type here has no father.

Answer II. This place refers more naturally to the priesthood of *Christ* than to his nature or existence. His priesthood was not derived by genealogical succession as *Aaron's* was: He had no father, no mother of the *levitical* tribe, or of the family of *Aaron*, from whom his priesthood could descend; nor did he die and leave it to others by way of descent; but was constituted a single priest himself, without a predecessor, without a successor: and herein the priesthood of *Melchisedec* and the priesthood of *Christ* run very parallel, and greatly answer the apostle's design. And I think this sense is patronized by some expressions in doctor *Owen's* comment.

Text VI. *Heb.* i. 6. "When he bringeth in his first-begotten into the world, he saith, let all the angels of God worship him;" that is, let all the angels of God worship the first-begotten; now this first-begotten is *Jehovah*, *Psal.* xcvi. 7. for thence the apostle cites it.

Answer. This first-begotten Son of God has true and eternal godhead personally dwelling in him, and united personally to him, and one with him; and therefore the whole complex person is called *Jehovah*, and is entitled to divine worship from angels and men. God united to the man *Christ*: "God manifest in the flesh was seen of angels," 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. and worshipped by them. This text does not prove that the first-begotten is God, any otherwise than by personal union with that *Jehovah* who is spoken of in the xcvi. *Psal.* The first-begotten Son of God is to be

be worshipped by angels, because of the indwelling godhead, the great *Jehovah*, with whom the man *Christ* is one.

The last text, and which affords perhaps the most important objection against my sense of the name, is *John* v. 18. compared with *John* x. 23, &c. If the title Son of God did not signify true godhead, why did the *jews* charge *Christ* with blasphemy, and say, that he "made himself equal with God," and seek to kill him, because he had said, "God was his Father, his own Father, and as they construe it, making himself equal with God?" *John* v. 18. And why do they charge him again with blasphemy, when he said, "I am the Son of God?" *John* x. 33. because that thou being a man, makest thyself God." How could this be, if the name Son of God did not signify godhead?

I have given some answer to that text in the fifth of *John*, in some of the foregoing pages. But to make it yet clearer, I proceed:

Answer I. It is possible that some learned men among them might have a confused notion from the prophecies of the old testament, that the *Messiah* or the Son of God was to have true and real godhead in him, which godhead of the *Messiah* is a certain truth, and hath been sufficiently proved. Now, because he called himself the Son of God, and represented himself as the *Messiah*, therefore they might infer that he assumed that godhead to himself which belonged to the complete character of the *Messiah*, and upon this account might charge him with blasphemy, by way of consequence.

Yet I have much reason to doubt, whether the scribes and pharisees did certainly know that the *Messiah* was to be the true God; for the whole nation of the *jews*, with their priests and doctors, were most stupidly and shamefully ignorant of the true character and glory of the *Messiah* and his kingdom. Had the pharisees themselves any notion that *Christ* was to be the true God, they would never have been puzzled and silenced at that question of our Saviour, *Matth.* xxii. 43, 44, &c. "If the *Messiah* be the son of *David*, how could *David* call him Lord? Or, If *David* calls him Lord, how is he his son?" Their supposition of the godhead of the *Messiah* would have easily answered this difficulty, if they had had any such opinion.

Besides, we have little reason to suppose that the pharisees knew more of the divinity of the *Messiah* than the disciples themselves did during the life of *Christ*. Now it appears from many parts of the history of the gospel, that they did hardly believe at all that he was the true God; or if they did, yet their faith of it was very low, wavering and doubtful; and yet doubtless they firmly believed *Jesus* to be the *Messiah* and the Son of God, in a sense sufficient for salvation.

When *Peter* in the name of the rest had made so glorious a confession, *Matth.* xvi. 16. "Thou art *Christ* the Son of the living God," he could not mean that *Christ* was the great and glorious God; for in verse 22. he "took up his master very short, and began to rebuke him." Surely he would not have rebuked the great God his maker, at least not immediately after such a confession of his godhead.

Now, if the apostles themselves were in a state of grace and salvation, when they can hardly be supposed to believe *Christ* to be the true and the eternal God, and yet they believed and professed him to be the Son of God, then that name Son of God doth not necessarily imply and include his divinity.

But to return to the objection.

That which I take to be the plainest, the clearest, and the most scriptural solution of this difficulty is this which follows,



Answer II. It is evident that the design of the wicked *jews* in these places of the history was to bring the highest accusation against our Saviour, and to load him with the grossest calumnies that all their wit or malice could draw from his words or actions, *Luke xi. 54.* "laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him."

If ever he spake of his kingdom, though he owned his "kingdom was not of this world," *John xviii. 36.* yet they in their malice would construe it into sedition and rebellion, and make him an enemy to *Cæsar*. And so when he called God his own Father, and declared himself to be the Son of God, they in the fury of their false zeal construe it into blasphemy; as though to own himself to be the Son of God, were to assume equality with God: whereas *Christ* shews them plainly, that these words did not necessarily imply such a sense; and this is sufficiently manifest by the defence which *Christ* made for himself in both those places of the history. Give me leave to repeat briefly what I said before.

If we look into *John v. 18.* when the *jews* accused him that by calling "God his Father he made himself equal with God," he doth by no means vindicate that sense of his name Son of God, but rather denies his equality with God considered as a Son, verse 19, &c. "Verily, verily I say — the Son can do nothing of himself: The Father sheweth the Son all things that he doth, and he will shew him greater works than these." Thence I infer, that he hath not shewn him all yet; and verse 30. "I can of myself do nothing. — I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father who hath sent me, &c." All which expressions sufficiently evince, that he did not intend to signify his own godhead, or equality with God, when he called himself the Son of God; for in his very answer to their accusation he represents himself inferior to and dependent on God the Father.

Now let us look into the other text where our Saviour is thus accused, and defends himself, viz. *John x. 30—39.* He saith, "I and my Father are one. 31. Then the *jews* took up stones again to stone him. 32. *Jesus* answered them, many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33. The *jews* answered him, saying, for a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy, and because that thou being a man, makest thyself God. 34. *Jesus* answered them, is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods? 35. If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken: 36. Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said I am the Son of God?"

In which portion of scripture we may observe these three things.

1. That *Christ* doth neither plainly and expressly own nor deny himself here to be the true God, for this was not a proper time to satisfy the curiosity of the malicious *jews* in such a sublime doctrine, in which he had not as yet clearly and fully instructed his own disciples. Yet,

2. He gives several hints of his godhead, or his being one with the Father, when he says, "I and my Father are one;" and when he says, verse 38. "I do the works of my Father, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him;" by which he secretly intimated that the man *Jesus* had also a divine nature in him, and was personally united to God, though he did not think fit to preach his own godhead plainly at that time.

And indeed if he had not been the true God, and in that sense one with the Father, we may justly suppose, that he would upon this occasion have denied himself to be true God, and thus roundly renounced the conclusion itself which they pretended

pretended to draw from his words, as well as he did deny the justness of their consequence, from his calling himself the Son of God. And therefore since he did not renounce the conclusion, we may reasonably infer that he was the true God: But since he does deny the justness of their consequence, we may as reasonably infer that his mere calling himself the Son of God does not prove nor include his godhead: which appears plainer under the next particular. I say therefore,

3. The chief design of his answer, was to refute the calumny of the *jews*, and the weakness of their inference, by shewing that the name Son of God, doth not necessarily signify one equal to God; but that the necessary sense of it here can rise no higher than to denote one who was nearer to the Father, and was sanctified, sealed, and sent by the Father in a way superior to all former prophets, kings and magistrates, to whom the word of God came, and who, partly on this account, might be called gods.

Prophets or kings, judges or doctors of the law were called gods, and children or sons of the most high, in *Psal.* lxxxii. 6. and in other places of scripture, because they came from God, they were commissioned by God, and carried with them some representation of the wisdom, power, authority, and dominion of God in the sight of men. Now our Lord *Jesus Christ*, the *Messiah*, the great prophet, judge, doctor or teacher, and king of his church, came forth from God in heaven, in a literal and more eminent manner, was sent by him into this world with a higher commission, and represented more of the wisdom, power, and dominion of God than any former kings or prophets ever did; and if they upon this account were dignified with the name or title of gods, or sons of God, much more right has the *Messiah*, to this name or title.

The argument which our Lord uses is "a minori ad majus;" he puts the reason of his more unquestionable and superior right to this title, upon the superiority of his character and mission, or his more immediate commission from the Father. His words might be paraphrased thus: They who were originally in and of this world were made prophets, teachers or kings, merely by the word of God coming to them, and giving them commission, either by the ordinary directions of the written word, or, at best, they received their authority from the word of God coming to them \* by some voice or vision, some divine message or inspiration, and yet they had the title of gods given them. Therefore the *Messiah* who was not originally of this world, but was with the Father, who was sanctified, that is, anointed with the Spirit, or set apart by God himself, who came forth from the Father in heaven, and was sent immediately by the Father into this world, may surely be called the Son of God without danger of blasphemy. If they are called gods, the *Messiah* may well be called the Son of God.

And he confirms the argument thus: "The scripture cannot be broken," ἡ συνταγὴ αὐτῶν, cannot be contradicted. As he who acts contrary to a precept is said to break it, λύνει, see *Matth.* v. 19. *John* v. 18. and vii. 23. So he who contradicts an assertion of scripture is properly said λύνει, to break it. Therefore, since the scripture which cannot be contradicted, calls those ancient rulers, teachers or prophets gods, as well as sons of God, he who is appointed the most glorious prophet and ruler,

\* Our Lord knew that he himself was the divine Logos or Word of God, and it is likely that he used these words, "To whom the word of God came," with this view and meaning in his own mind: "Surely if those are called gods, to whom the divine Logos or Word made a visit from the Father, the divine Logos himself who came from the Father may be well called the Son of God without blasphemy." But he did not think fit to express himself so plainly to the *jews* at that time, though he has left it upon record in his gospel for our observation and instruction.



ruler, might have been justified by the language of scripture, if he had assumed the name God to himself, in direct and express language, and much more abundantly is he justified when he has only called himself the Son of God.

And indeed it is worth our observation here, that though the *jews* built part of their accusation upon his saying, "I and my Father are one," *Jesus* does not directly answer to those words, nor undertake to vindicate or explain them; because he might design in those words to intimate his godhead or his oneness with God the Father: Therefore he neglects and drops this part of the ground of their charge, and applies himself intirely to answer their accusation, as it was built upon his calling God his own Father, and himself the Son of God: And this he did because he knew that this name did not necessarily imply equality with God, and so he could boldly refute their inference and renounce the charge.

Yet it should be observed also, that before *Christ* leaves them he leads them to his godhead, that is, to his most intimate union with the godhead of the Father, verse 38. "That ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him; that he and his Father are one," as he before expressed his godhead.

Thus I have explained myself at large in what I think to be the very scope and force of our Saviour's argument; and indeed if we take the word Son of God to signify necessarily in that place an equality with the Father; we plainly take away the force of our Saviour's argument and defence, and we leave the accusation of the malicious *jews* in it's full force against him\*.

In short, our Saviour's answer must necessarily mean one of these two things, viz.

Either when he called himself the Son of God, he did design to let them know that he was equal to God, but that he was no blasphemer, because it was a great truth:

Or he designed to tell them, that his words did not necessarily signify that he was equal to God, and therefore he was no blasphemer; that their inference was not just, and that they carried the charge further than his words would bear. One of these two must, I think, be our Saviour's design.

Now that he did not design the first of these, that is, to shew that he was equal to God, seems evident to me, because his answer cannot reach this sense; and if strained to this sense, it is very obscure and far-fetched: It might also have been spoken in much plainer language twenty ways, if it had been his design to tell the *jews*, that he was equal with God; and he would doubtless have proved it by plainer citations out of the old testament, which assert the divinity of the *Messiah*, had it been his design to declare and maintain his godhead at that time.

But if we suppose his design was only to shew the falsehood of their inference, and that they had strained his words too far, then the whole paragraph is natural, and easy to be understood, in the manner I have explained it.

From all this it will follow, that the belief of *Christ* to be the Son of God in some more eminent sense than all the ancient prophets and kings were, that is, to be the glorious *Messiah*, is all that *Christ* directly and plainly designed in calling himself the Son of God; and this must be all that was made necessary to salvation in those scriptures which required their belief in him as the Son of God.

Thus I have made it appear that the name Son of God cannot necessarily imply his divine nature, much less the incomprehensible eternal generation of the Son in one essence

\* The learned doctor *Waterland*, whose zeal for the deity of *Christ*, and whose skill in the defence of it, are sufficiently known, himself confesses that the *jews* could not from *Christ*'s own expression clearly convict him of meaning more than that he was God, in the improper sense of the word, as it had been used, *Psal.* lxxxii. 6. See his "Vindication of *Christ*'s divinity, page 55.

essence with the Father. For though I firmly believe him to be true God, and in that sense one with the Father, yet I would not place the chief weight of this doctrine on such arguments as will not support it, nor build so important a truth on an insufficient foundation.

But this thought leads me to the next section.

## S E C T I O N IV.

*What advantage is there in not applying the name Son of God to the divine nature of Christ?*

**A**FTER all, many a pious christian will be ready to enquire and say, Since you acknowledge *Jesus Christ* to have a divine nature, and to be truly and properly God, why have you taken so much pains to shew that his name the Son of God in scripture does not necessarily signify either his godhead or his coeternal generation and sonship?

To this enquiry I hope I can give some satisfactory answers, and offer such reasons as may justify and support this attempt, and guard it from the just censures of every reasonable and intelligent reader.

I. I was willing to search the true sense of scripture in this point, and to understand the meaning of God in his word.

Where any expression is used so very frequently in the bible as this name the Son of God is, and that in texts of awful and solemn importance, which determine the things necessary to our salvation, it is of great moment to know the meaning of that expression, that we may not include too little or too much in it: and this in order to understand the scripture aright in things necessary to salvation, and to have a true idea of what the Spirit of God means and intends; that we may not flatter careless hypocrites with vain hopes of salvation, by setting the mark too low, nor discourage humble believers by setting it too high: and that we may not abuse ourselves by false and mistaken notions, and imagine that we derive them all from the word of God.

II. I was afraid to build my belief of the deity of *Christ* upon feeble and insufficient foundations, and therefore I thought it necessary to examine this argument which is drawn from his sonship.

The great doctrine of the godhead of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and faith in him as the true God, has been by many persons built chiefly on this name which is given him, viz. the Son of God; and that upon this bare presumption, that as a son amongst men has the same specific nature with his father, so the Son of God must have the same individual nature with his Father; but how weak this argument is to support such a doctrine, appears in the foregoing discourse. Now I would not have the faith of christians in any important doctrine, that is divinely true, built upon a supposition that is feeble or false, lest the adversaries take occasion to insult the faith of christians, and to decry the doctrine itself, as though it had no better arguments or foundations to support it.

Besides, when christians have built their own faith and hopes upon a foundation so feeble and uncertain, they are more liable to have their creed shaken, and to part with the glorious doctrine itself; and therefore I would persuade them rather to build their faith on such arguments as will stand the test against all opposers: And

I think



I think most of those which I have made use of in the eighth and ninth propositions of the treatise of the christian doctrine of the trinity," see pages 420—452. may lay a claim to this character, and will better support this faith than any argument derived from his mere generation or sonship.

III. It is necessary as far as possible to remove all cavils from every important doctrine of christianity, and such is that of the deity of *Christ*.

Now if the doctrine of his deity be built on his sonship, then he must be true God considered as he is a son; but the notion of a Son in all languages of mankind importing some sort of derivation and dependence, and the notion of godhead importing independence and self-existence, seem to carry a sort of contradiction in them. And this becomes a mighty prejudice to the minds of men against their belief of the deity of *Christ*, when they are told, that he is God as he is a Son, or that his deity depends on his sonship, that is, his deity is included in his derived and dependent character.

Though I will not here assert that absolute self-existence and independence belong to every thing in and of God, for I know not what powers or properties of godhead depend on each other, yet I would not willingly prove the godhead of *Christ* from the very name which seems to exclude self-existence and independence, since there are many other and better proofs of it.

And though I dare not utterly renounce all those schemes of explaining the trinity, which make the divine nature of *Christ* to be in any way or manner whatsoever derived or communicated from the Father, for I must own myself lost in these unsearchables, yet I would not make the necessary proof of the divinity of *Christ* to depend on such a notion as in the common language of mankind implies derivation and dependence: and by this means, I think, I better guard this sacred truth from some of the cavils that have attended it.

Now if by this exposition of the name Son of God I remove any of the great impediments out of the way of the *Arians* or *Socinians* from believing the true deity of *Christ*, then I shall account myself to have done service and honour to that glorious article of our faith.

IV. I would do something to take away that anathema and damning sentence which some parties of christians who believe the divinity of *Christ* have thrown on others, who also believe his divinity, merely for not explaining some particular scriptures in the same way and manner that they do, or for not using the same arguments to prove his divinity.

Since it is made a test for our eternal salvation in some places of scripture, whether we believe *Jesus* to be the Son of God, or no; and since there are now, and have been in former ages, many christians of great piety and worth who doubt of the consubstantial sonship of *Christ*, and the eternal generation of his person, even though they believe his true and proper godhead, I would not willingly encourage the scripture to be interpreted in such a mistaken sense, as should exclude all these pious and excellent persons from salvation, and forbid them the kingdom of heaven. For they may believe him to be true God, and to be also the Son of God, though they do not believe his godhead to be owing to his sonship.

There are some persons who have been so severe as to pass a condemning sentence on all those who deny *Christ* the Son, considered as the Son, to be the true God. I hope they have done it merely through inadvertence, or because they thought it to be utterly impossible to maintain the godhead of *Christ* upon any other foot but that of his co-eternal and consubstantial sonship. But whatsoever be their reason

for such unjust censure, yet I must confess I do not love to see condemnation and everlasting death thrown upon persons who believe the same scriptural doctrine of the deity of *Christ* that we do, but chuse to explain it another way.

Thus some of my motives to this enquiry are to do justice to the truths of God, and some arise from charity to the souls of men. Nor is my zeal for the honour of my Lord *Jesus Christ* in the least abated; for while I believe him in his complex person to be both the true and eternal God, and also the only begotten Son of the Father, and while I profess him to be withal the great prophet and teacher, as well as the Saviour of his church; I conceive that more honour is done him by searching out that true and exact meaning of his own words which this heavenly teacher designed to convey to us, than by persuading the world to read his eternal godhead in those places where he did not design to reveal and express it to men.

## Q U E S T I O N II.

*Did the disciples of Christ fully believe that he was the true God during his life-time, or not till after his death and resurrection?*

**I**N order to solve this question, let us make these following enquiries, viz.

- I. What notion the *jews* had of their *Messiah* in general.
- II. What ideas or notions *Christ* taught his disciples concerning himself.
- III. What apprehensions or notions the disciples received and imbraced concerning *Christ*.
- IV. What indications they may be supposed to give tending toward the belief of his godhead.
- V. What indications they give of their ignorance or doubt of it, or at least what evidences there are of the fluctuation and uncertainty of their faith in that matter.

Now, by balancing these things one with another, we may at last come to form some true judgment about the present question.

## S E C T I O N I.

*The jews old opinion concerning the Messiah.*

**I. WHAT** notion had the *jews* in general concerning their *Messiah*?

Answer. Though the old testament furnished them with sufficient prophecies concerning his divine and human nature, his spiritual kingdom, his sufferings, his death and resurrection from the dead, yet so wretchedly blinded were they with the corrupt glosses of their teachers, and with their own foolish prejudices, that they did agree in no notion concerning the *Messiah* more universally than in these false and mistaken ones, viz. that he was to be a glorious temporal prince, that he was never to suffer, nor to die, and consequently not to rise again, and that he was



to exalt their nation equal to or beyond it's ancient grandeur, and to raise them to a temporal sovereignty over all the nations of the earth.

And the disciples themselves were so rooted in these mistaken notions, that nothing could quite cure them but the actual death and resurrection of *Christ*, his ascent to heaven, and his pouring down the enlightening Spirit at the days of *Pentecost*. For we find it evident enough, that the two sons of *Zebedee*, *James* and *John*, hoped to be made great ministers of state, and "sit at his right-hand and at his left in a temporal kingdom," *Matth.* xx. 21. We read that when our Lord spoke of his own death and sufferings, "*Peter* rebuked him for it," *Matth.* xvi. 22. And none of them "knew what his rising from the dead should mean," *Mark* ix. 10. for they thought, together with the rest of the people, that *Christ* or the *Messiah* "abideth for ever," that is, must never die, *John* xii. 34. And even after the resurrection of *Christ* they expected with some impatience the same temporal glory and grandeur when they said, *Acts* i. 16. "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom unto *Israel*?"

But to descend to particulars, and enquire what opinion the *jews* had of the nature of their *Messiah*, who or what he was to be.

1. They generally believed he should be a man of their own nation, of the tribe of *Judah*, of the seed of *David*, born at *Bethlehem*, who was to be the king of the *jews*, and their Saviour. When *Herod* demanded where the *Messiah* "the king of the *jews* should be born, the chief-priests and scribes told him, at *Bethlehem*, *Matth.* ii. 5. "And they said to him, in *Bethlehem* of *Judah*, for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou *Bethlehem* in the land of *Judah* art not the least among the princes of *Judah*, for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people *Israel*." And when *Jesus* asked the pharisees, *Matth.* xxii. 42. "Whose son is *Christ*, or the *Messiah*? they roundly answered, the son of *David*."

Yet others of the *jews* were so very ignorant and doubtful in this matter, that they refused *Jesus*, and denied him to be the *Messiah*, for this very reason, because they knew his birth and parentage. *John* vii. 27. "We know this man whence he is, but when *Christ* cometh, no man knoweth whence he is."

2. They believed that he had an existence before he came into the world; for we can hardly suppose that the scribes and priests should be so ready in citing one part of this verse, *Micah* v. 2. which shews him to be "born at *Bethlehem*, and take no notice of the other part of it, a ruler in *Israel*, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Yet it may perhaps be doubted whether this opinion was universal, because in some instances they were stupid enough to believe one part of a chapter or period concerning the *Messiah*'s glory, and neglect another part which related to his sufferings.

3. They believed that he had some glorious and eminent relation to God. This appears from the name of honour that the *Messiah* was universally known by amongst them, viz. the Son of God. The scribes, the pharisees, the priests, and all the *jews*, talked with our Lord *Jesus* freely about the *Messiah* under this name and title, as being the common name of the *Messiah*, and perfectly well-known amongst them, viz. that the *Messiah* was the Son of God in some superior and more excellent way. When *Philip* told *Nathanael*, *John* i. 46. "We have found him of whom *Moses* and the prophets did write," that is, the *Messiah*; *Nathanael* being convinced that *Jesus* was he, presently saluted him by this name, "thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of *Israel*."

4. The prophets in the old testament frequently intimate the divinity of *Christ*; and some few of the ancient *jews* might probably believe that he was the *memra*, or word of the Lord, the *shekinah* or glorious habitation of God, of which the *chaldees* paraphrast sometimes speaks. Doctor *Allix* in his "judgment of the ancient *jewish* church" against the unitarians, seems to be too positive and triumphant in this point, that this *memra* or *Logos* to which the *chaldees* paraphrast ascribes the creation of the world, and the government of it, and particularly of the *jewish* nation, is the *Messiah* in their sense. Mr. *Nye* and others utterly deny it. But the excellent Mr. *Robert Fleming*, in his discourse of "christology, volume I. pages 136—144." very judiciously follows a middle path, and tells us, "That he did not find one of the many citations used by doctor *Allix* that seemed to necessitate our judgment this way. Therefore he run through the targums himself in those places where he thought it most probable to find what he sought, and yet could find but few passages that seemed very plainly to relate to the *Messiah*." Upon which he concludes, "That though the word *memra* is sometimes used for the *Messiah*, yet it is much more frequently used in other senses, and that the *jewish* *memra* and *Messiah* are spoken of sometimes as two distinct beings or persons\*."

But what doubtful hints or plain evidences soever there might be from the books of the prophets or these paraphrastical authors, that *Christ* was to be the true God, yet the *jews* in *Christ's* time did not generally believe it: And though some learned authors have asserted it, yet I never saw it proved.

Surely if the *pharisees* had but embraced this opinion, they could never have been at a loss to have answered our Lord *Jesus*, when he asked them, *Matth.* xxii. 45, 46. "If *Christ* be *David's* Son, how doth he in Spirit call him Lord?" It was plain by their silence and confusion, that they did not believe his godhead. Bishop *Bull* is of this mind as well as doctor *Whitby*. See *Bull's* "judicium ecclesiæ catholicæ, &c." capite i. sectione 13. and *Whitby's* commentary.

In short, their notions of this matter were so very confused, so uncertain, so inconsistent, and so various, that they cannot be reduced to any certain or settled scheme of sentiments.

## S E C T I O N II.

*What ideas did Christ give his disciples of himself.*

II. I Proceed now in the second place to inquire, what ideas or notions our Lord *Jesus Christ* taught his disciples concerning himself.

1. He takes particular pains upon many occasions to shew that he was sent from God, or received commission from heaven to teach the doctrines which he taught, and to perform those glorious and surprizing miracles which he wrought, to confirm

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both

\* Mr. *Fleming* in that place tells us, that though he could not find the word *memra* and *Messiah* used as explicatory of one another in those places which are plainly prophetic of *Christ*, yet he supposes the reason might be this, that *memra* denotes *Christ* with relation only to his divine nature before his assuming human nature, and *Messiah* denotes him only as he was to appear visibly and become man; therefore it was hardly possible that both these words should be used of him at once. See "christology, volume I. page 143." Thus it is evident that Mr. *Fleming* searched after this notion with a seeming inclination to find it true, yet he could not find so great and uncontested evidence of it, as to suppose that the ancient *jews* generally embraced this opinion, that the *memra* or Word of God was the same with the *Messiah*.



both his doctrine and his commission. This is so largely insisted on in the fifth, sixth, and following chapters of the gospel by *St. John*, that I need not cite particular instances.

2. He proves by most infallible evidences, that he was the *Messiah*, the Saviour of mankind: and he endeavoured to lead his disciples out of their own national prejudices, and to give them a juster notion of the office of the *Messiah*, and his spiritual kingdom. This he did in several of his discourses.

But as to the proof that he himself was the *Messiah*, he did not labour this point so much by any long or direct discourses on this subject, as by his preaching grace and duty, so as never man spake before; by his miracles and his appearance upon all occasions, with the marks and characters of the *Messiah* upon him. To prove this, I shall give but one instance instead of many: When *John* the baptist sent his disciples to ask him whether he was the *Messiah* or no, *Matth. xi. 3.* "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Our Lord answered them only, by bidding them tell *John* their master, that "the blind received sight, the lame walk, the dead are raised, and to the poor the gospel is preached, and let *John* and his followers judge by these characters whether I am the *Messiah* or no." Though I confess there are two or three occasions also which he took to profess himself the *Messiah* in direct and plain words, *John iv. 29.* and *ix. 37.*

He often takes occasion to declare, that he had a being before he came into this world. *John iii. 13.* "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man, &c." *John v. 38.* "I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me." Verse 51. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven." *John viii. 14.* "I know whence I came, and whither I go." *John xvi. 28.* "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." And his disciples understood him in the plain literal sense, verse 29. for immediately his disciples said unto him, "Lo, now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no parable." *John viii. 58.* "Verily I say unto you, before *Abraham* was, I am." And in his prayer to his Father, *John xvii. 5.* "Now, O Father, glorify me with thy ownself, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Verse 24. "—My glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

4. He assumes to himself the character of the Son of God, and that in a more eminent and superior way than men or angels are the sons of God; for he calls himself "the only begotten Son of God," *John xiii. 16, 18.* "The beloved Son of God," *John v. 20.* which he also took care that his disciples should know, twice by a voice from heaven; *Luke iii. 22.* at his baptism, and *Luke ix. 35.* at his transfiguration. He told them also that he was such a Son of God as knew the Father so as none besides knew him, *Luke x. 22.* such a Son as that "the Father shewed him all things that himself did," *John v. 20.* and that "whatsoever things the Father doth, these doth the Son likewise," verse 19. that the "Father has committed all judgment to him, that all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father," verses 22, 23. and that the "dead should hear the voice of the Son of God and live; and as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself:" which things cannot be supposed to be spoken of any mere creature, and therefore by this sort of language, he gave some intimations of his union with godhead, or his divinity, though the mere name Son of God be not construed to so divine a sense.

5. He

5. He sometimes takes opportunity to acquaint them with his most intimate union or oneness with the Father, and his peculiar communion with him. For when he says, *John* x. 29. "My Father, who gave me my sheep, is greater than all;" yet he adds in the next verse, "I and my Father are one:" which I think are intimations of a superior and inferior nature, and that the divine nature of the Father was in him. This also he discovers in some other places. *John* x. 38. "Believe the works that I do, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him." *John* xiv. 7-11. "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. *Philip* saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. *Jesus* saith unto him, have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, *Philip*? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayst thou, shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works sake."

6. There are also several other intimations that our Lord gave of his divinity; though it was not the doctrine that he thought fit at that time to teach in plain and express language.

When he tells them, that "where two or three are gathered together in my name; there am I in the midst of them." *Matth.* xviii. 20. the greek words are ἐν ἐμῷ ὀνόματι, which seem to denote a divine omnipresence. When he says to *Peter*, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," *Matth.* xvi. 14. it sounds god-like. When he promises the disciples, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gain-say," *Luke* xxi. 15. When *John* ii. 19. "Destroy this temple and I will raise it up in three days;" he imitates divine language so much, that it might have led the disciples onward to the belief of his deity.

His active behaviour and conduct in several instances was such, as there is some reason to think he would scarce have practised, had he not been true God; such as his taking frequent occasion to shew that he knew their hearts and their secret thoughts; his godlike way in working some of his miracles, which seems to be the very same which a god incarnate would have used: his sovereign and godlike manner in casting out devils, and his conveying miraculous gifts, in the same way that God himself would probably have done; and his giving the holy Spirit to his disciples, in such a manner, *John* xx. 21, 22. "As my Father hath sent me, so send I you; and when he had thus said, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, receive ye the holy Ghost," which seems to be an imitation of God creating the human soul of *Adam*, *Gen.* ii. 7. "He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Though it must be noted indeed that this was after his resurrection, and so comes not within the reach of my present enquiry.

His passive behaviour also was such as we can hardly suppose he would have practised, had he not been God; for he admitted persons on several occasions to worship him, which we find both angels and apostles always forbid, lest they should seem to assume the divine prerogative and honour: He did not deny his godhead when the *jews* charged him with assuming equality with God, &c. several of which circumstances, both of the active and passive conduct of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, are set in the fairest



fairest and strongest light towards the proof of his divinity, by Mr. *Hughes* in his "two essays" on that subject. And some parts of the argument seem to carry great weight and force with them; but I would not venture to lay the whole stress of the cause there.

Thus though our blessed Saviour did not plainly and expressly declare that he was the true and eternal God; for his divine prudence did not think it proper to express his godhead in such direct and glorious language at that season\*; yet by all these methods of speech, and by this divine conduct of his, which I have described in the three last particulars, he seems to have given abundant intimations that his "human nature had a peculiar union to, and communion with godhead:" But since the new testament is complete, we can understand those hints better than his disciples could in that day.

And though he did not use these words, that *Jesus* the Son of man is personally united to the divine nature, yet he said so much as in our apprehension now amounts to this sense, when he said, "I and my Father are one," *John* x. 30. "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." "The Father who is in me doth the works. He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father," &c. *John* xiv. 9—11. that is, he hath seen the glory and power, and grace of the Father, whose divine nature or godhead is also in the Son, and dwells in me bodily. And though we can never tell exactly what makes the personal union between the divine and human natures in *Christ*; yet perhaps this may be a just evidence of a personal union with the godhead, viz. when the actions and characters and sufferings which *Christ* performed and sustained, might be properly said to be performed and sustained immediately by God himself. But I much question whether his disciples in that day did certainly infer so much from these words.

### S E C T I O N III.

*What idea the disciples had of Christ.*

III. **I** Come now to consider "what apprehensions or notions the disciples did receive concerning our Lord *Jesus Christ* in his own life-time."

It is not enough for me here to repeat the foregoing heads, and shew what *Christ* told them; for we cannot say the disciples understood and effectually learned all that our Lord *Jesus Christ* taught them. It is evident in many other places of the history of the gospel, that he spoke several things to them which were above their present apprehension; the Spirit of God which was promised to descend upon them, was not only to bring to remembrance the things that *Christ* had spoken; but to give them a fuller understanding in the meaning of them. And as there were many things which *Christ* had to say to them, but forbore in his life-time, because they could not bear them

\* It is no wonder that our Saviour did not freely and publicly declare his own godhead in plain and express language, when he did not chuse to declare himself the *Messiah* in such an evident manner of speech, but very seldom, and that privately too; though the doctrine of his messiahship was then of so much more importance.

But there are many special reasons also which might be given, why our Lord *Jesus* did not proclaim his own godhead during the time of his ministry on earth. I shall mention but one that is evident and sufficient, viz. that he must have done it either with plain and convincing proofs of it, or without them. If he had only

them yet, *John* xvi. 12. So there were some things which he did speak to them in a more obscure manner, by hints and intimations, which they could not at that time bear in the full light and glory of a divine explication.

But if we search the evangelical history, I think we shall find that they received and entertained the following sentiments concerning him.

1. They firmly believed that he was sent of God. Our Lord *Jesus Christ* himself was witness to this faith, *John* xvii. 8. "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and they have believed that thou didst send me."

2. They were convinced that he was the true *Messiah*: *John* vi. 69. "We believe and are sure that thou art that *Christ*."

3. That he had a peculiar and glorious relation to God, that he was the Son of the living God, which primarily referred to the dignity of his person, and oftentimes included in it also his character, or office as the appointed Saviour. This was the substance of *Nathanael's* confession, *John* i. 49. "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of *Israel*." This was also *Peter's* confession, *Mattb.* xvi. 16. "Thou art *Christ* the Son of the living God," which he spake in the name of the rest, as well as *John* vi. 69. where the same words are repeated.

4. They believed also that he had an existence before he came into this world. When the disciples told him, *John* xvi. 30. "We believe that thou camest forth from God;" it is evident from the context that they did not only mean that he received his commission from heaven, and was sent by God to preach to the world; but that he had a being with the Father before he came into this world, as he himself expresses it, verse 28. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father:" which they understood in the literal sense, without metaphors, as they themselves express it; "Now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no parable or metaphor," verse 29. And our Lord *Jesus Christ* in his testimony concerning them, seems to make these two distinct articles of their belief, viz. his pre-existence and his mission, *John* xvii. 8. "They have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me."

5. They believed also that God was in a most eminent and peculiar manner present with him, according to the multitude of expressions he had used to that purpose, of his Father's being with him, and of the Father's dwelling in him: And this was the language of their sermons at first, *Acts* x. 38. *Jesus* of *Nazareth* did great things, for God was with him. But they did not seem to have any fixed and certain belief of such a peculiar and personal union of the man *Christ Jesus* with the true God during his life-time, as to give him the name and title of God. They had heard him say, that he and his Father were one; but they did scarce understand his oneness with the Father, and communion in the godhead in so sublime a sense, as was afterwards revealed to them, for they never called him God before his resurrection. Which brings me to the next general head.

# SECTION.

only asserted it plainly, without convincing proof, he had hastened the malice of the *jews* to put him to death for blasphemy, before he had fulfilled all his designed ministry upon earth. On the other hand, if he had given most convincing proofs of it while he asserted it, the *jews* and gentiles had been restrained from putting him to death at all; for *St. Paul* tells us expressly, *1 Cor.* ii. 8. "Had the princes of this world known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."



## S E C T I O N IV.

*What evidence they gave of believing his true deity.*

IV. **T**HE fourth thing I proposed was to shew what indications the disciples may be supposed to give tending towards a belief of his godhead.

1. Upon some special occasions they worshipped him. The leper that was cleansed worshipped *Christ*, *Matth.* viii. 2. "The ruler that sought the life of his daughter, worshipped him," *Matth.* ix. 18. "The woman of *Canaan* worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me," *Matth.* xv. 25. But all this was before he wrought the miracle in their favour; and probably it signifies no more than a great degree of humility in the manner of their petition, perhaps a bowing the knee, or falling on the face at his feet.

The blind man, who was healed, worshipped him also, when he professed himself to be the Son of God, *John* ix. 38. and his disciples that were in the ship worshipped him, when he walked on the water and suppressed the storm, *Matth.* xiv. 32, 33.

But it may be doubted whether all this arises to the notion of religious and divine worship, since this word is sometimes used in scripture, referring to moral or civil honours paid to our fellow-creatures, 1 *Chron.* xxix. 20. "They bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord and the king." *Matth.* xviii. 26. "The servant fell down and worshipped his Lord." *Rev.* iii. 9. where *Christ* himself says to the church at *Sardis*, "I will make them to come and worship before thy feet." And perhaps some that knew not that *Christ* was God, might pay this sort of worship to him here on earth, that is, a mere high degree of reverence and obeisance under the surprising influence of the miracles which they heard of, or which they saw.

When one of the ten lepers which were healed, came back, *Luke* xvii. 15. it is said, "with a loud voice he glorified God, and fell down on his face at the feet of *Christ*, giving him thanks, and he was a *samaritan*. Now it may be observed here, that the cleansed leper first glorified God, as the great author and first cause of his healing, and then fell down on his face in a worshipping posture at the feet of *Christ* to give him thanks, as the glorious means and miraculous instrument of his deliverance, not knowing that *Christ* who healed him, was himself the true God.

Thus these persons did not seem to worship our Lord as the true and eternal God with proper divine worship. Yet it seems probable that he would have scarce accepted of any such imitation of divine worship, or indulged any thing that had the appearance of it, if he had not been true God. Many persons might pay *Christ* this high degree of honour and prostration without belief of his deity, though perhaps he would have refused it, had he been a mere creature; even as *Cornelius* worshipped *Peter*, *Acts* x. 25. when we have no reason to believe that he thought *Peter* was the true God: Yet *Peter* forbid it, lest it should have any appearance of assuming divine dignity to himself.

2. *Simon Peter* was greatly surprized at the multitude of fishes taken at once, when he let down his net at the direction of *Christ*, *Luke* v. 4, &c. When he saw it, "He fell down at *Jesus* knees, saying, depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Which expression may seem to import, "Thou art so holy and pure, O Lord, and  
hast

hast something so divine in thee, and so much like God, who hates all sin, that such a poor sinful wretch as I am, have too much defilement in me to come so near thee, and may have just reason to dread thy presence." Whether he might at this season have an overwhelming glimpse of his divinity, it is not easy to say: But it may be easily said, that this miracle alone was not sufficient to give a just convincing proof of his godhead.

3. The apostles seem to make a petition to *Christ* for spiritual mercies in a way of divine worship, *Luke xvii. 5.* "and the apostles said to the Lord, increase our faith;" which address seems to have more of the appearance of religious worship paid to him by them, than any other expression I know of before the resurrection of *Christ*.

Yet some would question whether this petition did evidence their firm belief of his godhead: For when they had seen him put forth his miraculous power on the bodies of men in such a glorious manner, when they found that he knew the thoughts of their hearts\*, and had an inward acquaintance with their souls, which appeared in several instances, and when they had seen and heard him forgive sins, *Matth. ix. 2.* and *Luke v. 20.* perhaps they might imagine that God had given him this spiritual power over their souls, and that he was commissioned to exercise this power, even as he commissioned his disciples to "heal the sick, to raise the dead, &c." *Matth. x. 18.* and to forgive sins, *John xx. 23.* though he were not in his own nature the true and eternal God. For it is remarkable, that when he forgave the sins of the man whom he healed of the palsy, though the scribes and pharisees said "Who can forgive sins but God?" and so charged him with blasphemy; yet the multitude only marvelled and glorified God who had given such power unto men, *Matth. ix. 8.* Now the multitude spoke honestly the sense of their hearts, but the scribes stretched his conduct to an accusation of blasphemy.

There is a parallel case in *Mark ix. 22.* where the man brought his son who was possessed with the devil, to our blessed Lord; "Master, says he, if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us and help us." Here it is evident that the man had not so much as a firm belief whether *Christ* could work this miracle or no, much less can he be supposed to believe that *Christ* was the true and eternal God: then presently afterwards he cried out, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." Now the utmost that we can reasonably imagine his sudden faith arrived at, was a belief that *Christ* was able to cast out the devil and cure his son; yet he desires *Christ* to help his unbelief. Now the mere sudden expression of this request will hardly prove the poor man was convinced of the godhead of *Christ*; for it is possible he might mean only, shew thy power, and give some further testimony to assist my faith. But if he did believe *Christ*'s deity, then we must suppose him transported by a sudden divine impulse beyond the general faith of the apostles themselves, and carried above the dispensation of that day.

\* The mere knowledge of their thoughts was not sufficient to prove the divinity of *Christ*, since God has been pleased in former times to communicate this knowledge to his prophets; so *Abijah* knew the thoughts of *Jeroboam*'s wife, for God had told him. *1 Kings xiv. 5, 6.* "The Lord said to *Abijah*, behold the wife of *Jeroboam* cometh to ask a thing of thee, &c." And much less can we suppose the disciples in that day of darkness and ignorance did from thence infer his deity. Yet I think that expression of *Christ*, *Rev. ii. 23.* "Ye shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and the hearts," compared with *Jer. xi. 20.* and *xvii. 10.* gives us a good argument for his deity, or that he is one with that God who searches the heart as his peculiar prerogative; but this was long after his ascent to heaven.



4. The disciples may seem to own his omniscience *John* xvi. 30. "Now we are sure that thou knowest all things, &c." but probably at that time they understood this "all things" in a limited sense, as *2 Sam.* xiv. 20. where the woman said the same thing to *David*; so *1 John* ii. 20. "Ye have an unction and know all things," and verse 27. For the utmost inference the disciples make from it was, that "*Jesus* came forth from God," verse 30. not that he was God himself. It may be another reason also to think the disciples understood this word "all things" in a limited sense, because *Christ* himself had told them but a very little before this time, that he himself did not know the day of judgment. *Matth.* xxiv. 36. and *Mark* xiii. 32.

Though I think it reasonable for us to go farther than they did, and to apply several of the things I have mentioned to his godhead, viz. his knowing their thoughts, his forgiveness of sins, &c. because we have a full account of these and many other transactions of *Christ*, and we know so much of his divinity and glory from other parts of the bible; yet whether the disciples in that day did infer his divinity from any of these foregoing occurrences, and applied them to him as to the true God, may bear a just doubt and enquiry.

5. They believed that he was the *Messiah*; and the *Messiah* is spoken of in several places of the old testament under the character and titles of the true God. But as we cannot find that the learned doctors of that age did generally understand those prophecies, or believe the true deity of the *Messiah*, so neither do we find any hint in the history of the gospel that the apostles themselves before the death of *Christ* understood these prophecies, so far as to apply them to the *Messiah* in that sense; but only thought him to be the greatest of prophets, and to be the appointed king of *Israel* and their Saviour.

6. They believed and confessed him to be the Son of God: but this title does not necessarily amount to any more than a glorious likeness to God, a nearer and more peculiar relation to God, a special office of messiahship, and a more eminent derivation of his human nature from God than any other creatures, either angels or men, who are called the sons of God, could ever pretend: This I think is made pretty evident in another dissertation.

Thus I have mentioned the fairest and strongest evidences that I can find of any degree of faith or belief that the disciples had of the deity of *Christ* during his life, and it is possible they might sometimes have a glimpse of that glorious doctrine.

## S E C T I O N V.

*What evidence they gave of disbelieving his true deity.*

V. **T**HE last thing I proposed, was to shew, "what indications the disciples gave during the life-time of *Christ* of their disbelief of his godhead, or at least of the uncertainty of their faith in that matter."

1. If they had a firm and steady belief that he was the true God, surely we should have found them upon some occasion or another evidently expressing their faith in this matter, both for their own and their master's interest and honour; since we never find that he forbid them to publish this to the world, though he did forbid them to publish some of his miracles, his transfiguration, his own prophecies of his death, resurrection, and ascension, &c.

And

And if they had not thought proper to publish to the world, that their master was the true God, yet we have much reason to suppose that, if they had believed it, they would upon some occasion or other before his death, have addressed him as *Thomas* did after his resurrection, "My Lord and my God." *John* xx. 28.

We cannot but suppose also, that amongst their many doubts and queries, they would have asked him this obvious and important one, how could he be God, and his Father be God also, and yet not two Gods? But we find nothing of this kind, though they put many a question to him both of less difficulty and less importance.

Nor do we find that they talked of him to the world under any character of godhead; but on the contrary, we always find them speaking of him as a man, and that not only in his life-time, but just after his death too, as a great prophet that was risen up amongst them, *Luke* xxiv. 19. "*Jesus of Nazareth* a prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all the people."

2. If they had believed him to be the true God that made the heavens, and the earth, the winds and the seas, they would never have expressed so much surprize and wonder at his rebuking the wind and bidding the sea be calm. *Luke* viii. 24, 25. "They being afraid, wondered, saying one to another, what manner of man is this? for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him." I confess the word man is not in the original; but still their wonder at the obedience that was paid him by the elements seems an argument that they did not believe him to be the almighty God that made them.

Now this is not the first time they were thus astonished and surprized; for when *Simon Peter*, a good while before this let down his net, at the command of *Christ*, and inclosed a great multitude of fishes, he was astonished and all that were with him, *Luke* v. 9. And if any of them may seem to have a glimpse of his divinity on this occasion, yet they had forgot or lost it again, when in chapter viii. they were as much surprized at his rebuking the winds and the waves.

You have another instance of this kind, *Matth.* xxi. 19, 20. "And when the disciples saw that the fig-tree which our Lord cursed, presently withered, they marvelled, saying, how soon is the fig-tree withered away!" And this was not long before his death neither, when we may suppose their knowledge was most advanced; whereas the disciples would never have marvelled that he could destroy a fig-tree by a word, if they had believed him to be that God who made all things by his word.

3. If they had believed *Christ* to be the great and glorious God, they would not have treated him with such an indecent roughness, as they did upon some particular occasions; as *Matth.* xv. 33. when *Christ* said, he would not send away the people fasting, lest they faint in the way, the disciples made him a very rude reply, to say no worse of it, when they answered, "Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness to fill so great a multitude?"

Another instance of this kind appears in their free and unbecoming address to *Jesus*, *Matth.* xv. 12. "Then came his disciples and said to him, knowest thou that the pharisees were offended after they heard this saying?" without so much as sir, or master to preface it. Whereby it is plain, they either at that time doubted whether he knew what offence the pharisees took, or else they gave him a reproof for speaking such things as should offend the pharisees, and a caution lest he did it again.



But either of these suppositions sufficiently manifest they did not believe him to be the true God.

So when he spake of his death and resurrection, *Matth. xvi. 22.* it is said, "*Peter* took him and began to rebuke him, saying, This shall not be unto thee, Lord." Now we can hardly suppose that *Peter* would have been so free as to take up such language to his great creator, and to give such a rebuke to his God.

I might add also, that though the virgin *Mary* under the influence of rapture and inspiration expresses herself thus, *Luke i. 47.* "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour," yet if she had firmly believed her son to be her God, she would not have chid him so severely when he was twelve years old, *Luke ii. 48.* "Son, why hast thou dealt thus with us?" because he stayed in the temple, and was left behind, when they travelled homeward.

4. If they had thought *Jesus Christ* was the "true God, they would never have tried to entertain the curiosity of their master, by shewing him how magnificent the buildings of the temple were," *Matth. xxiv. 1.* "His disciples came unto him for to shew him the buildings of the temple; and one of them said to him, Master, see what manner of stones and buildings are here," *Mark xiii. 1.* and as *St. Luke* expresses it, "how it was adorned with goodly stones," *Luke xxi. 5.* They must needs know this was but a poor entertainment to please that glorious being, who had formed and built this earth, and had spread abroad the starry canopy of the heavens.

5. They had frequent opportunity of observing that *Christ* knew their thoughts, and on this occasion they once took notice, *John xvi. 30.* and said, "Now we are sure that thou knowest all things." Now if they had been convinced that he was the true God, they would certainly have declared their sense and faith of his godhead, and not have contented themselves with this poor inference; "by this we believe that thou comest forth from God," that is, thou hadst a being, or didst dwell with the Father, and art come from him. And even when they arose to this degree of belief, our Lord takes notice, that their faith had not been very long advanced so far as this, or at least, it had not been long established and firmly rooted in this point: For verse 31. "*Jesus* answered them, Do ye now believe?"

After all, I might observe this also concerning *Martha* and *Mary*, who were well acquainted with *Jesus*, and for whom he had a peculiar and special affection, as well as for *Lazarus* their brother, *John xi. 6.* and he had so far acquainted them with his person and office, that they "believed him to be the *Christ*, or *Messiah*, the Son of God which should come into the world," verse 27. Yet neither of them speak of any faith they had, that he had power in himself to raise the dead, though *Jesus* seems to have urged them to it, verse 25. The utmost faith which they express is this, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," verses 21, and 32. and verse 22. "I know that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee."

Upon the whole survey of things it appears that the disciples during the life of *Christ* had not arrived to any firm belief of his godhead: And if at any time they had a glimpse of his deity, it seems rather to be under the influence of a surprize and rapture, beyond the level of that imperfect dispensation, and beyond the common exercise of their faith in that day.

And indeed *Thomas* seems to be under the power of such a divine rapture, when even after the resurrection of *Christ* he was favoured with so sensible a conviction, and he cried out, *John xx. 28.* "My Lord and my God;" which is the first plain and certain indication of any of the apostles believing the deity of *Christ*.

These

These things will give occasion to three or four more questions, viz.

Question I. "Did the disciples believe him then to be a mere common man?"

Answer No, I think not: For it is very probable that they were informed of his extraordinary conception, and his birth of the virgin *Mary* his mother, so that he came into the world in a diviner way, and superior to other men, having God himself for the Father even of his flesh: And thus "the holy thing that was born of the virgin was called the Son of God," *Luke i. 35.*

It is probable also that they believed that sublime and near relation in which his soul stood to God, being the Son of God in a superior sense to all other men, even before his incarnation; and that he had a pre-existent state, where he dwelt with God, and whence he "came forth from God when he came into this world," *John xvi. 27, 28.* Thus he was eminently the Son of God, as to his body and his soul.

They also believed him to be the *Messiah*, their anointed king, and the highest and greatest of all the prophets, the redeemer of *Israel*, and their Saviour, and that in this sense also he was the Son of God.

They knew him also to be indued with the Spirit of God in a most glorious and eminent degree; or as *John* the baptist expresses it, to have the "Spirit given him without measure," *John iii. 34.*

And they knew the peculiar and intimate presence of the Father was with him, which he so often taught them in express words, *John xiv. 10, 11. x. 30.* that "the Father was in him and he in the Father; and that he and the Father were one:" yet they did scarce arrive at the belief of a personal union of the human nature with the divine.

All these things joined together exalted his character in their esteem, far above the common level of mankind.

Question II. If they did not believe the godhead of *Christ* who had such special advantages above other men, "may it not well be doubted whether there were sufficient proofs of his divinity ever given to mankind before his death?"

Answer I. By several scriptures of the old testament, I think the godhead of the *Messiah* might have been proved, and when they had compared these prophecies with the actions and life of *Christ*, they had plain evidences that he was this *Messiah*: The disciples therefore might have had reasonable ground to have inferred this doctrine of his deity. But so ignorant was that generation, so overrun with national mistakes, so unacquainted with scripture, and the true meaning of it, that the apostles in that day did not believe many other things concerning *Christ*, which were written in the old testament in as plain and express language as his godhead. Such were the predictions of his sorrows and sufferings, his death and his rising again, and his final exaltation: But we have *Christ*'s own words for it, even after he rose again, that they were "fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken," *Luke xxiv. 25.*

Answer II. Some of the speeches which *Christ* made concerning himself do certainly represent him in too sublime a character for any mere creature; which I have mentioned before: and by some circumstances of his conduct, they might have found out his godhead, especially if they had compared them with his character as *Messiah*. But they laboured under the power of many prejudices, and as our Lord often charges them, that they were dull of apprehension, hard to be instructed, and slow to believe.

Answer



Answer III. Though there might be a bare external sufficiency in the notices that *Christ* gave of his own godhead for their conviction, yet these were made more abundantly clear and evident to them, when according to the promise of *Christ*, "his Spirit brought to remembrance," and explained the things that he had before said to them: then he "took of the things of *Christ*," and revealed them to his apostles as he promised, *John* xiv. 26. and xvi. 14.

I might add also, that all these notices and evidences of the divinity of *Christ*, stand in a much fairer light before us who have the whole history of the life, death, and resurrection of *Christ*; and the writings and sermons of the apostles, to compare with the writings of the prophets; which it was not possible the disciples should do in so complete a manner, and to so great satisfaction during the life of *Christ*, had they been ever so sagacious, and ever so well prepared.

Question III. "How could the disciples trust in him as their Saviour, and commit their souls to him for salvation in his life-time, if they had not a firm faith in his godhead?"

Answer. The way whereby the fathers before *Christ* were saved, was not so much by a direct act of faith on the person of the *Messiah*, who was to come, as by the direct and immediate exercise of faith or trust on the mercy of God, as it was to be revealed in and through the *Messiah* in due time. Now the dispensation of those three or four years which past during the life of *Christ*, was a sort of medium between the law and gospel: and the acts and exercises of the apostles faith or trust and dependence, like that of the patriarchs, might be more directly placed on the mercy of God himself for salvation, as it had begun to manifest itself in and by *Jesus* the *Messiah*, now come into the world. So *St. Peter* expresses it, *1 Pet.* i. 21. "You who by him do believe in God."

Though they were frequently called to believe in *Christ*, yet you find they were so unskilled in a direct act of divine faith on him, that our Lord was fain to repeat the command with great solemnity but just before his death. *John* xiv. 1. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me:" as if he should have said, "Ye have a long time trusted and professed your faith in God and his mercy, make me now also the direct object of your faith or trust, as ye have made God the Father."

Answer II. Under the great darkness and confusion of their notions in that season of twilight, they sometimes paid too little honour to *Christ*, because they had too low an esteem of him; and sometimes the honour they paid him through the influence of rapture and surprize, though not too high in itself, yet it might be above and beyond the clear discernment of their understandings and their own settled judgment concerning him. Thus they might now and then exert some faint acts of divine faith on him, while in the main they were doubtful of his godhead. But a gracious God makes great allowances for such weaknesses in faith and practice, where the divine discoveries which he makes to men, have but imperfect degrees of light and evidence.

Question IV. "Does it not follow then, if the disciples were in a state of grace, and yet doubted of the deity of *Christ*; surely the deity of *Christ* was not a fundamental article in that day?"

Answer I. Fundamentals are different in different seasons and times, nations and ages; for as God makes more or less discoveries of divine truth to men, so more or less is necessary to be believed in order to salvation.

Surely it was not a fundamental article for *Peter* to know, and believe the sufferings and death of *Christ* as a sacrifice for sin, and his resurrection from the dead, at that

that time when he rebuked our Saviour himself, because he spake of his dying, *Matth.* xvi. 22. And when none of the apostles knew what rising from the dead should mean, as *Mark* ix. 10. yet the belief of the death and resurrection of *Christ* was certainly a fundamental article, and necessary to salvation in a little time afterward; and is become necessary to christianity itself, *1 Cor.* xv. 14, 17. "If *Christ* be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain, ye are yet in your sins."

The doctrine of the divinity of *Christ* therefore may not be supposed to be a fundamental article in the time of *Christ*'s life, because we have reason to believe the apostles were in a state of grace and salvation, before there is any sufficient evidence of their faith therein: But it will not follow thence, that the same doctrine either is or is not a fundamental, after it has been more fully and clearly revealed by the complete writings of the new testament: And indeed a truth ought to be revealed very plainly and with convincing evidence, before it can be ever called a fundamental.

It has been the constant method of divine wisdom in all ages, to communicate to man the glorious discoveries of the grace of God by slow and gentle degrees, and not to overwhelm our faculties at once with a flood of divine light. He knows the weakness of our frame, he knows how dark are our understandings, how feeble our judgments, how many and great our natural prejudices, and how hard it is to surmount them; and he demands our belief in measures answerable to his discoveries. It is according to the growing evidence of any divine revelation, and the gradual advantages that any man has to know and understand that revelation, that God justly expects the growing exercises of our faith.

Thus that faith which is necessary to salvation, consists of more or fewer articles, according to the different ages of the church, and different degrees of revelation and divine light.

Thus though our Lord *Jesus Christ* was true God when he came first to be manifest in the flesh, yet the complete glory of his person and the beams of his godhead did not discover themselves in a triumphant and convincing light during the days of his humiliation: and though it was necessary then, to all those who had clear knowledge of his doctrine and miracles, to believe that he was the *Messiah*, "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins," *John* viii. 24. yet it doth not seem at that time to have been made necessary to believe his deity, since the discoveries of it were but imperfect, and it is plain that his own apostles hardly believed it.

It is certain, that after the resurrection of *Christ*, and the days of *Pentecost*, the apostles by degrees had more divine light let into their souls by the holy Spirit, whereby they arrived at a fuller knowledge of the glory of his person and his godhead; yet it is very probable that the idea which I have before described, is the highest they attained in his life-time; and that not only on the account of the arguments I have used already, but because this notion was so fixed and rooted in their minds, that they generally described our Lord *Jesus Christ* in this manner, in all their first ministrations of the gospel, and they thought it proper to teach others in the same manner as they had learned. So St. *Peter*, *Acts* ii. 22. tells the men of *Israel*, "*Jesus of Nazareth* was a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves know, verse 24. whom God has raised up, having loosed the pains of death."

Again,



Again, *Acts* iii. 13. "The God of our fathers hath glorified his son *Jesus*, whom ye delivered up, &c." And he cites *Moses* to shew what he was, verse 22. "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me." So when he preached to *Cornelius* a roman, *Acts* x. 38. "God hath anointed *Jesus* of *Nazareth* with the holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil, for God was him, &c."

And *St. Paul* himself preached *Christ* under this inferior character at first, though he came not a whit behind the chiefest of the apostles in knowledge, *2 Cor.* xii. 11. and *Gal.* ii. 6. In his sermon at *Athens*, he says, "God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead," *Acts* xvii. 31. Thus they begun with the human nature and the offices of *Christ*, and the peculiar assisting presence of God with him, before they taught any thing of the mystery of his own godhead or personal union with the divine nature.

And indeed there is a good deal of reason, why they should not at first reveal and display the glorious doctrine of the trinity and the godhead of *Jesus*, though they had known it ever so well. It was not fit they should break in all at once upon the blind *jewish* nation, nor upon the blinder gentiles, with the blaze of *Christ's* divinity. For, to speak humanly, it would have filled the minds of strangers with surprizing doubts and scruples, and raised in them an utter prejudice against all further attention to the gospel, if they had been told at first of three persons who were each of them the true God, and yet all three but one God\*. This was not proper to be the very first lesson in christianity. The great work of the conversion of the world was done by degrees as human nature could bear. Thus God hath treated men in all ages, and led them on "from faith to faith," *Rom.* i. 17. Thus our Lord *Jesus Christ* treated his disciples, *John* xvi. 12. "I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now." And thus the apostles treated the *jews* and gentiles, to whom they preached, *1 Cor.* iii. 2. and "fed them

\* There is a remarkable instance to this purpose in the "Conferences of the *danish* missionaries with the heathens of *Malabar*." The missionary speaking of the Son of God, the *malabarian* replied, Who is his Son? and is he also God? *Missionary*. He is God blessed for ever. *Malabarian*. But pray Sir, recollect yourself, have not you been just now inveighing against plurality of Gods? And now I find, you have yourselves more than one; the Father is God, and the Son is God, then you have two gods. *Missionary*. We do not believe two gods, but one only God; though at the same time, we firmly believe, that there are three persons in one divine essence; and yet these three persons are not three, but one God: And this we believe as a great mystery, &c. And then he goes on to explain it by the understanding and the will proceeding from the soul, which are yet really one and the same thing with the soul. Upon which the *malabarian* makes this reply; I find, said he, that you, with your subtil ways of arguing, can make a trinity consistent with unity; and if your explication is absolutely necessary to make others understand what you mean, pray, allow us the same advantage of explaining the doctrine of our religion, and putting it in the most favourable light we can, for the excluding the absurdities imputed to us? And this once granted us, it will follow, that our plurality does not destroy the unity of God, no more than your trinity does. We worship the gods upon no other account, than because they are the vicegerents of the almighty, whose administration he employs in governing the world, as he did employ them at the beginning, in creating and forming the same. And our God appearing among men at sundry times under different shapes, had at every apparition a different name given him, which contributed very much to the multiplying of the number of our images; whereas in truth, they are but different representations of the same God, under different aspects and appearances. See "Conference number xi." Now if the apostles had dealt so imprudently with the heathens or with the *jews*, by preaching the doctrine of the trinity at first in the fullest expressions, they had embarrassed the minds of their hearers, and exposed themselves and their doctrine of salvation by *Jesus the Messiah* to such difficulties and wrangling disputations. But you find no controversies of this kind raised in their first preaching.

them with milk and not with mear, for they were not able to bear it." Thus by slow degrees they led them from the knowledge of *Jesus*, the son of man, to the knowledge of *Jesus* the Son of God; from the discovery of *Jesus* the prophet, to the discovery of *Jesus* the *Messiah*, the priest and the king; from the revelation of *Christ* the Saviour of men to the revelation of *Christ* the eternal life and the true God; from the doctrine of the presence of God with him, to the doctrine of his personal union with godhead, "in whom dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily," *Col. ii. 9.* and who is "God over all blessed for ever," *Rom. ix. 5.* by virtue of this glorious and personal union with the eternal God.

### Q U E S T I O N III.

*Could the Son of God properly enter into a covenant with his Father to do and suffer what was necessary to our redemption, without a human soul?*

#### S E C T I O N I.

**I**T is granted that the generality of our christian writers believe that it was only the divine nature or godhead of *Christ* had an existence before he was conceived by the virgin *Mary*, and became incarnate; yet whensoever they would represent the exceeding great love of the Father in sending his Son into our world, that he might suffer and die for us, and when they would describe the transcendent love of *Christ*, in his coming into our world, and his submitting to death for our sakes, they usually represent it in such language as can never agree to his divine nature in any propriety of speech, but only to the pre-existent human soul of *Christ*, with it's descent into flesh and blood, and the sufferings of this human soul for us. And it is evident that the scripture itself leads them plainly to such a representation of things: so that while they are explaining the transcendent degree of the love of God and *Christ* to sinners, according to scripture, they are led by the force of truth into such expressions as are indeed hardly consistent with their own professed opinions, but perfectly consistent with the revelation of scripture, and the doctrine of the pre-existent soul of *Christ*.

I was lately looking into the sermons of that most excellent practical and evangelical writer, the late Mr. *John Flavel*, in his treatise called "the fountain of life opened, or a display of *Christ*;" where I found the following expressions.

Sermon II. page 13. in quarto, where the excellent author is describing the glorious condition of the non-incarnate Son of God, he says, "*Christ* was not then abased to the condition of a creature, but it was an unconceivable abasement to the absolute independent being to come under the law; yea, not only under the obedience, but also under the malediction and curse of the law, *Gal. iv. 4.* "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."



Page 14. "He was never pinched with poverty and wants while he continued in that bosom, as he was afterwards. Ah blessed *Jesus*! Thou needest not to have wanted a place to have lain thy head, hadst thou not left that bosom for my sake." And here the author quotes Mr. *Anthony Burges*, in his lectures on *John*. "He that was in the bosom of the Father and had the most intimate, close, and secret delight and love from the Father, how unspeakable is it that he should deprive himself of the sense of it, to put himself, as it were out of heaven into hell!" Mr. *Flavel* then proceeds, "He never underwent reproach and shame in that bosom: There was nothing but glory and honour reflected upon him by his Father, though afterward he was despised and rejected of men. All the while he lay in that bosom of peace and love, he never knew what it was to be assaulted with temptations, to be besieged and battered upon by unclean spirits as he did afterwards: The Lord embraced him from eternity, but never wounded him till he stood in our place and room. There were no hidings or withdrawments of his Father from him; there was not a cloud from eternity upon the face of God till *Jesus Christ* had left that bosom. It was a new thing to *Christ* to see frowns in the face of his Father. There were never any impressions of his Father's wrath upon him, as there were afterward. There was no death to which he was subject in that bosom. All these things were new things to *Christ*; he was above them all, 'till for our sakes he voluntarily subjected himself unto them."

Then, after the author has shewn how great was the intimacy, the dearnefs, the delight, which was between the Father and the Son, considered in their divine nature, he draws some inferences, page 17.

"Inference I. What an astonishing act of love was this, for the Father to give the delight, the darling of his soul out of his very bosom for poor sinners? Never did any child lie so close to a parent's heart as *Christ* did to his Father's; and yet he willingly parts with him, though his only one, the Son of his delight; and that to death, a cursed death for the worst of sinners. O matchless love! a love past finding out! if the Father had not loved thee, he had never parted with such a Son for thee."

"Inference II. Adore, and be for ever astonished at the love of *Jesus Christ* to poor sinners, that ever he should consent to leave such a bosom, and the ineffable delights that were there, for such poor worms as we are. O the heights, depths, lengths, and breadths of unmeasurable love!" "It is admirable, says Mr. *Burges* on *John* xvii. that *Christ* should not only put himself out of comfort, but out of that manifested honour and glory he might have retained to himself." "If ever you found by experience what it is to be in the bosom of God by divine communion, would you be persuaded to leave such a bosom for all the good that is in the world? And yet *Jesus Christ*, who was embraced in that bosom after another manner than ever you were acquainted with, freely left it, and laid down the glory and riches he enjoyed there for your sakes. What manner of love is this? Who ever loved as *Christ* loves? Who ever denied himself for *Christ*, as *Christ* denied himself for us?" Then after the third inference, he adds:

"Inference IV. How worthy is *Jesus Christ* of all our love and delight! he that left God's bosom for you, deserves a place in your bosoms."

"Exhortation. If *Christ* lay eternally in this bosom of love, and yet was content to forsake and leave it for your sakes, then be you ready to forsake and leave all the comforts you have on earth for *Christ*."

Again,

Again, Sermon IV. page 35. "Consider how near and dear *Jesus Christ* was to the Father: He was his Son, his only Son, saith the text: The Son of his love: The darling of his soul: His other self; yea, one with himself: The express image of his person: The brightness of his Father's glory: In parting with him, he parted with his own heart, with his very bowels, as I may say. Yet to us a Son is given, *Isai. ix. 6.* And such a Son as he calls his dear Son."

Now if we suppose the human soul of our Lord *Jesus Christ* to have had a pre-existent state of joy and glory in the bosom of the Father through all former ages of the world, and even before the world was created, then these expressions are great and noble, are just and true, and have a happy aptness and propriety in them to set forth the transcendent love of God the Father in sending his Son, and the transcendent love of *Christ*, the Son of God, in coming from heaven, and leaving the joys and glories of his Father's immediate presence in heaven, to take on him such flesh and blood as our's is, and in that flesh and blood to sustain shame, sorrow, pain, anguish of flesh and spirit, sharp agonies, and the pangs of death.

And this love is exceedingly enhanced, while we consider that this human soul of *Christ* was personally united to this divine nature; so that hereby God himself is joined to flesh and blood, "God becomes manifest in the flesh." *1 Tim. iii. 16.*

But on the other hand, if we suppose nothing but the pure divine nature of *Christ* to exist before his incarnation, then all these expressions seem to have very little justness or propriety in them: for the divine nature of *Christ*, how distinct soever it is supposed to be from God the Father, yet can never leave the Father's bosom, can never divest itself of any one joy or felicity that it was ever possessed of, nor lose even the least degree of it: nor could God the Father ever dismiss the divine nature of his Son from his own bosom. Godhead must have eternal and complete beatitude, joy and glory, and can never be dispossessed of it. Godhead can sustain no real sorrow, suffering or pain. The utmost that can be said concerning the deity of *Christ* is, that there is a relative imputation of the sorrows, sufferings and pains of the human nature, to the divine, because of the union between them; so that the sufferings acquire a sort of divine dignity and merit hereby: It is granted indeed that this relative and imputative suffering may be sufficient in a legal sense to advance the dignity of the sacrifice of *Christ*, to a complete and equivalent satisfaction for sin; yet the exceeding greatness of the love of the Father and the Son does not seem to be so sensibly manifested to us hereby, for all this abasement of the godhead of *Christ* is merely relative and not real.

And as it is plain that the divine nature of *Christ* could not be separated from the bosom of his Father, when he came into this world and took flesh upon him, so neither could the human nature leave this bosom of the Father, if it had no prior existence, and was never there. Therefore in the common scheme all this glorious and pathetic representation of the love of *Christ* in leaving the joys and glories of heaven when he came to dwell upon earth, has no ideas belonging to it, and it can be true in no sense, since it can neither be attributed to the human nor to the divine nature of *Christ*, nor to his whole person. I grant that by the figure of communication of properties, what is true of one nature may be attributed to the whole person, or sometimes to the other nature; yet that which is not true concerning either nature of *Christ* separated, nor concerning the two natures united, cannot be attributed to him at all: So that parting with the bosom of his Father, and forsaking the joys and glories he possessed there, are, according to the common scheme, words of which we have no ideas.



But now if we conceive the soul of *Christ* in it's pre-existent state, as the first-born of every creature, the darling of the soul of God, who, as it were, lay in the bosom of the Father, to come forth from the Father and come into this world, *John* xvi. 28. to part with the joys and glories it was possessed of there before the foundation of the world, *John* xvii. 5. to dwell in a feeble mansion of flesh and blood, pain and sorrow, to be cramped and confined in human limbs, and to sustain the pangs and punishment of a cursed death on the cross for the sake of rebellious creatures. This is amazing love indeed; this has a surprizing and sensible reality in it, and should awaken all the powers of our souls to admire and adore both God the Father for sending his Son *Jesus Christ*, and *Christ* himself for consenting to such an abasement.

## S E C T I O N II.

**I**T has been made evident in the foregoing section that our best divines following the track of scripture light and the sacred dictates of the word of God, have set the transcendent love of God the Father in sending his Son, and the love of *Christ* in his incarnation and death, in a most beautiful and affecting light, if we suppose the soul of *Christ* to have had a pre-existent state of joy and glory with the Father before the world was. But I fear their expressions are scarce consistent with any clear or just ideas or conceptions, while they deny each part of the human nature of *Christ*, that is, his soul as well as his body, to exist before his incarnation.

There is yet another and a very remarkable instance wherein our protestant divines in a very just and affecting manner represent the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son according to scripture, upon the supposition of the pre-existence of *Christ*'s human soul: But according to the common or scholastic explication of the distinction of persons in the trinity, and the denial of this pre-existent soul of *Christ*, we can have no ideas under all their glorious and affectionate representations of this transaction between the Father and the Son. Let us enquire a little into this matter.

The common or scholastic explication of the trinity, which has been long universally received by our protestant writers, and has been called orthodox for these several hundred years, is this, viz. That God is but one simple, infinite and eternal spirit: Thence it follows, that the divine essence, powers, and essential properties of the Father, the Son and the Spirit in the godhead are numerically the very same essence, powers, and essential properties: That it is the same numerical consciousness, understanding, will and power which belongs to the Father that belongs also to the Son and to the holy Spirit: and that the sacred three are distinguished only by the super-added relative properties of paternity, filiation and procession; but their thoughts, ideas, volitions and agencies, according to this hypothesis, must be the very same numerical thoughts, ideas, actions, and volitions, in all the sacred three.

Now having these excellent sermons of Mr. *Flavel* before me, who has well represented this doctrine of the covenant of redemption, and the transactions between God the Father and his Son before the world was, I would cite some part of that discourse, in order to shew how well his representation of this matter agrees with the doctrine of the pre-existent soul of *Christ*, though it can never agree to the common explication of the trinity without it. See sermon III. page 23, &c.

“ I. Con-

"1. Consider the persons transacting and dealing with each other in this covenant: These are God the Father, and God the Son: the former as a creditor, the latter as a surety: the Father stands upon satisfaction, the Son engages to give it."

"2. Consider the business transacted between them, and that was the redemption and recovery of all God's elect."

"3. The manner or quality of this transaction: It was federal, or in the nature of a covenant: It was by mutual engagements and stipulations, each person undertaking to perform his part in order to our recovery. The Father promiseth that he "will hold his hand and keep him," *Isai. xlii. 6.* The Son promiseth he will obey his Father's call to suffering, and not be rebellious, *Isai. 1. 5.* and having promised, each holds the other to his engagement."

"4. Consider the articles to which they both agree: God the Father promises to invest him with a threefold office, viz. to make him a priest, *Psal. cx. 4.* "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." *Heb. v. 5.* "Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that said unto him thou art my Son." God the Father promises to make him a prophet, *Isa. xlii. 6.* "I will give thee for a light to the gentiles, to open blind eyes." And to make him a king, *Psal. ii. 6, 7.* "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thy inheritance." Further the Father promiseth to stand by him, assist him, and strengthen him for his work: *Isa. xlii. 5, 6, 7.* "I will hold thy hand," that is, I will underprop and support thy humanity when it is ready to sink under the burden. He professeth to crown his work with success, to accept him in his work, and to reward him for it with great exaltation: *Psal. ii. 7.* "I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." It is spoken of the day of his resurrection when he had just finished his suffering, and so the apostle expounds and applies it, *Acts xiii. 33.* and in *Heb. xii. 2.* This was "the joy that was set before him, which encouraged him to endure the cross and despise the shame."

"In like manner Jesus Christ restipulates and gives his engagement to the Father, that upon these terms he is content to be made flesh, to divest himself as it were of his glory, to come under the obedience and malediction of the law, and not to refuse any the hardest sufferings it should please the Father to inflict on him. *Psal. xl. 6, 7.* "Then said I, lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O God."

"5. These articles were by both parties performed precisely and punctually."

"6. This compact between the Father and the Son bears date from eternity, before this world was made: while as yet we had no existence, but only in the infinite mind and purpose of God. *2 Tim. i. 9.* "The grace which was given us in Christ before the world began" was this grace of redemption, which from everlasting was thus contrived and designed for us. Then was the council or consultation of peace between them both, as some take that scripture, *Zech. vi. 13.*

"Page 28. God the Father and God the Son do mutually rely and trust to one another in the business of our redemption. The Father relies upon the Son for the performance of his part. The Father so far trusted Christ, that upon the credit of his promise to come into the world and in the fulness of time to become a sacrifice for the elect, he saved all the old testament saints. And so doth Christ in like manner depend upon and trust his Father for the accomplishment of all this promise, that he shall see his seed; and that all the elect that are yet behind, yet unregenerated,



ted, as well as those already called, shall be preserved to the heavenly kingdom."

Page 29. This excellent author, represents this transaction between the Father and the Son before the world was in a way of dialogue: He supposes the Father to say, "My Son, here be a company of poor miserable souls that have utterly undone themselves, and now lie open to my justice; justice demands satisfaction for them, or will satisfy itself in the eternal ruin of them. What shall be done for these souls? And thus *Christ* replies: O my Father! Such is my love to, and pity for them, that rather than they shall perish eternally, I will be responsible for them as their surety; I will rather chuse to suffer thy wrath than they should suffer it; charge their debt all upon me, I am able to discharge it: And though it impoverish all my riches, and empty all my treasures, for so it did indeed, 2 Cor. viii. 9. "Though he were rich, yet for our sakes he became poor," I am content to undertake it."

Here I again desire my reader to observe, I cite not the words of that great and excellent man to refute them, for I greatly approve of almost every expression; much less would I expose that venerable author, whose memory and writings I sincerely reverence and honour: but my design is to shew what is the usual language of our best divines on this subject, for I might cite passages of the like nature out of a multitude of excellent writers: This is only a specimen of one for the rest.

Now in reading over such accounts of stipulations and contract between the Father and the Son before the foundation of the world, what proper conceptions can we frame, or what clear ideas can we possibly have, while we suppose nothing but *Christ's* divine nature transacting this affair with the Father; and while at the same time we believe the divine essence, perfections and powers, the understanding, will, thought and consciousness of the Father and of the Son to be numerically one and the same, since in the godhead or divine nature, they are but one and the same infinite spirit? The mere personalities, viz. paternity and filiation, cannot consult and transact these affairs in a way of contract, proposal and consent: It is nothing but two distinct consciousnesses and two distinct wills can enter into such a covenant; but in the common explication of the trinity, the distinct personalities of the Father and the Son do not make any real distinct consciousnesses or distinct wills in the one infinite spirit.

And let it be further noted also, that according to several of the articles of this covenant, one of these beings or persons covenanting, seems to be inferior to the other, and to be capable of receiving orders, commission, support and recompense from the other: But if only the deity of *Christ* existed at that time, and the deity of *Christ* and of the Father have but one and the same numerical consciousness and volition, one and the same numerical power and glory, what need of orders and commissions, what need of promises of support and recompense? How can the pure godhead of *Christ* be supported, or be recompensed by the Father, who has eternally the same numerical glory and power?

In short, all these sacred and pathetic representations of stipulation and articles in the common scheme, can amount to no more in our clear ideas, and in a proper conception of things, than the simple decree or volition of the one eternal, infinite spirit.

I grant we may suppose the great God in a figurative manner of speech consulting thus with his own wisdom, with the divine powers or principles of agency in his own nature, as a man may be figuratively said to consult with his own understanding, or

reason,

reason, or conscience: But in literal and proper language, it seems to be nothing else but an absolute decree of the great God, that the man *Christ Jesus*, when formed and united to godhead, should undertake and fulfil this work, four thousand years after this world was made. And thus, according to the common hypothesis, that very intelligent being which was to come into flesh, and to sustain all the real sufferings, gave no such early antecedent consent to this covenant. It was only the godhead of *Christ*, which is impassible and could really suffer nothing, did decree that the human nature should exist hereafter, that it should be united to the godhead, and should sustain agonies and death for the sins of men.

I would enquire farther also, according to this explication of things, what possible difference can we conceive between the love of the Father in sending his Son, and the love of the Son in consenting to be sent on this compassionate errand, if there were not two distinct consciousnesses, and two distinct wills, if it was only one simple numerical volition of the great God? And how doth this abate our grand ideas of the distinct and condescending love of our blessed Saviour, in his consent to this covenant, since that part of him which really suffered, that is, his inferior nature, had then no existence, and therefore could give no consent to this early covenant of redemption.

If some of these difficulties may possibly obtain any tolerable solution, by introducing many figures of speech, and be thus explained, according to the common explication of the trinity, without supposing the pre-existence of the human soul of *Christ*, yet I am much inclined to think they can never be all solved or explained upon that hypothesis.

But on the other hand, if we give ourselves leave to conceive of the human soul of our Lord *Jesus Christ* in it's pre-existent state as the *πρωτόγονος*, the first-born of every creature, *Col. i. 15.* as the *ἀρχή*, that is, the beginning or the chief of the creation of God, *Rev. iii. 14.* lying in the bosom of the Father, *John i. 18.* and intimately united to the eternal God, then here are proper subjects for these federal transactions in the covenant of redemption before the foundation of the world. And a most glorious and divine covenant it was, between the Father and the Son in this view of things for the salvation of poor ruined man.

Though this blessed soul of *Christ* were united immediately to the divine nature, yet God the Father might part with it, as it were, out of his own bosom, that is, divest it of heavenly joys and glories \* by it's own consent, without dissolving the union: God the Father might prepare a body for it, and send it to dwell in flesh and blood: God might inflict the punishment of our sins upon this blessed soul of *Christ* incarnate, and afterwards give it a high exaltation, not only to the glory which it had with the Father before the world was, but to superior joys and glories as the reward of it's sufferings, according to scripture, *John xvii. 5.* and *Phil. ii. 9.*

And this blessed soul of *Christ* united to godhead, is a proper subject to enter into these articles, to accept of the terms of this covenant of redemption, to consent to part with the bosom of the Father, &c. And thus *Christ*, when he came forth from the

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\* Note, this divesting of the soul of *Christ* of it's primitive joys and glories does not require a dissolution of it's union to the divine nature; for the godhead may be still united, and yet may influence the human soul in greater or less degrees, and in various manners, as to light, support, joy, glory, &c. according to different occasions and circumstances, which must be exceeding different in a state of humiliation and of exaltation; and the manner and the degree of influence must always be determined only by the divine wisdom.



the Father, and came into this world," *John* xvi. 28. laid aside "that glory which he had with the Father before the world was," *John* xvii. 5. and "though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor," *2 Cor.* viii. 9. And thus the Father and the Son manifest their transcendent love to poor rebel sinners in this federal transaction, this covenant of redemption before time began, which is the foundation of all that was ever done in time toward the restitution of the posterity of *Adam*, to the favour and the image of God, and to everlasting happiness. Every thing coincides admirably well in this scheme, and answers the various expressions of scripture on this subject, without straining the words by needless tropes and figures: It becomes so plain that he that runs may read it, and every private christian may understand these early grounds and foundations of his hope.

### A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

**N**OTE, in a few months will be published a large and more complete treatise on this subject, viz. "the pre-existent soul of our Lord *Jesus Christ*." \*

### Q U E S T I O N. IV.

*Is the godhead of Christ and the godhead of the Father one and the same godhead?*

**T**H E R E are several considerations which lead me to agree with this general opinion of almost all our divines in the two last centuries, viz. that the godhead of *Christ* is the same individual godhead with that of the Father; and that his divine nature is not another infinite spirit distinct from the Father, whatsoever sublime distinctions there may be in that one infinite spirit, one of which, viz. the Word or wisdom, may perhaps have a more peculiar respect to the second person in the trinity, viz. the Son; and the other, viz. the power of God; to the holy Ghost.

1. If the divine nature of *Christ* be another distinct principle of self-consciousness and volition, another distinct spiritual being, or another spirit, this approaches so near to the doctrine of another God, that it is very hard to distinguish it. For so far as our ideas of arithmetic and reason can reach, this seems to be a plain truth, "If one infinite spirit be one God, two or three infinite spirits, must be two or three Gods."

And though the patrons of this opinion suppose these three spirits to be so nearly united as to be called one God merely to avoid the charge of polytheism, yet it must be granted, that this one God must then be one complex infinite being, or spirit, made up of three single infinite beings or spirits; which is such a notion of the one true

\* This hath been published, and is entitled "the glory of *Christ* as God-man displayed."

true God, as I think neither reason nor revelation will admit. And yet if this were the true notion of the one God, it is very strange that scripture should not clearly and expressly reveal it.

2. The God of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, the God of *Israel*, the almighty, and *Jehovah*, is the proper style and title by which God the Father was known under the old testament: and it is under these titles and characters that he often appeared to the patriarchs: yet it is agreed by all trinitarians that it was *Jesus Christ* appeared to the patriarchs, and assumed this style and these titles of godhead; which we justly suppose he could not have assumed if he had not had true godhead belonging to his complex person. And not only so, but this true godhead must also be the godhead of the Father, otherwise he could not have assumed those very titles by which God the Father was always known to the church, and by which they worshipped him as the God and Father of all. If the deity of *Christ* were another distinct essence or spirit, his assuming those names whereby God the Father only was known to the *Israelites*, would lead them into mistake and confusion.

Objection. I know it may be objected here, that *Christ's* assuming the names and titles of God the Father would lead them into as much confusion and mistake, by leading them to believe that *Christ* was God the Father; and it may be urged yet further, that these titles thus assumed, would prove that *Christ* was God, no more than that it does prove that *Christ* was the Father.

Answer. If *Christ* has the same godhead as the Father, and if in these ancient appearances *Christ* came in the name of the Father, as his representative, there is no great inconvenience nor confusion if he were taken for God the Father, speaking and acting in and by the angel of the covenant, or *Jesus Christ* in his pre-existent state: But there would be great confusion and inconvenience in *Christ's* assuming these divine names, if he had not godhead belonging to him, for then we should take a creature for God.

3. Several scriptures of the old testament, which are cited by the writers of the new testament and applied to *Christ*, do most evidently refer to the great one God, the God of *Israel*, the almighty, the *Jehovah* in the old testament, whom all that read the old testament before the days of *Christ* must suppose to mean God the Father of all, such as *Psal.* lxxviii. 18. "Thou hast ascended on high," cited *Ephes.* iv. 8. And *Psal.* xcvi. 7. "Worship him all ye gods," cited *Heb.* i. 6. And *Psal.* cii. 24, 25. "O my God, of old thou hast laid the foundations of the earth," cited *Heb.* i. 10. And *Isa.* xl. 3, 4, 5. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," cited *Matth.* iii. 3. And *Joel* ii. 32. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered," cited *Heb.* xii. 26. And *Isa.* viii. 13, 14. "Sanctify the Lord of hosts, and he shall be for a stone of stumbling," cited *1 Pet.* ii. 6, 8. and several other places.

Now we cannot suppose, that all the holy men before *Christ* were utterly mistaken in their application of these texts to God the Father, since there is a plain and proper sense wherein this application is true. And yet these texts are properly applied to *Christ*, if we suppose the godhead of the Father and of *Christ* to be the same, and that the man *Christ Jesus* was the *shekinah* or habitation of the great God intimately and personally united to him, and so made one person with him, but still under the character of filiation or mediation. And in this sense *Christ* was *Emmanuel*, or God with us, *Matth.* i. 23.

Besides, let it be further considered, that the design of the apostles in the citation of these texts, and the application of them to *Christ*, was to prove the glory, dignity and divine grandeur of the complex person of *Christ*: But this citation of these



texts, and the application of them to *Christ*, will scarce prove the godhead of *Christ*, unless he has the same godhead with that of the Father: nor indeed will they prove the dignity or glory of the person of *Christ* any other way; but as they shew that what was spoken of old concerning the godhead of the Father must necessarily belong also to *Christ*.

If *Christ* considered as God were another distinct spirit from the godhead of the Father, I think these citations of the apostle out of the prophets would hardly prove his godhead; nor do I see how they could prove the grandeur and dignity of his person, unless it were granted that the godhead of the Father was his godhead, that *Christ* and the Father are one in this respect.

4. When *Christ* expresses his own godhead in the new testament, it is by declaring his oneness with the Father, that is, the union of the man *Christ Jesus* with the same godhead that is in the Father. "I and the Father are one, *John* x. 30. He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. I am in the Father, and the Father in me. The Father in me doth the works," *John* xiv. 9, 10. And it must be observed that there is not any place in the new testament where the miraculous works of *Christ* are ascribed to any distinct godhead of his own different from the godhead of the Father, or the godhead of the Spirit of God that dwelt in him: And it is not reasonable to suppose that *Christ* would have always used these modes of speaking, and attributed his own works to the Father and his Spirit, if he himself had another godhead or divine nature different from that of the Father and the Spirit: For why should his miraculous works be attributed to the aids of another infinite spirit which was not united to the man *Jesus*, and never be ascribed at all to that distinct spirit which is supposed to be united to him? I am sure this sort of representations lead our thoughts away from supposing *Christ* to have any godhead at all, if it be not the same as the Father's.

5. If the godhead of *Christ* be another distinct spiritual being different from the godhead of the Father, I do not see any fair and reasonable manner, how the trinitarians can solve the difficulties which arise from those scriptures, where God the Father is represented as the only true God, and under that idea distinguished from *Jesus Christ*; as *John* xvii. 3. "To know thee the only true God, and *Jesus Christ* whom thou hast sent. 1 *Cor.* viii. 6. To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things; and one Lord *Jesus Christ*, by whom are all things. *Ephes.* iv. 5, 6. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." Now we can scarce suppose the highest nature of *Jesus Christ* to be another infinite spirit distinct from God the Father, without excluding it from godhead by these express scriptures: but they may easily be explained to admit *Christ*'s godhead, if we suppose *Christ* to be spoken of in these places chiefly in his inferior characters as man and mediator; and yet he may be united to, and inhabited by the one true and eternal God, who is at other times called the Father, as being vested with different relative properties, and first in the great oeconomy, as I have sufficiently shewn in other papers.

I add also, those texts in the prophets, where it is said, "I am God, and there is none else, there is none besides me, I know not any," *Isai.* xlv. 6, 8. and xlv. 21, 22. give a further confirmation to this sentiment. For,

Whether we suppose the Father or the Son to be the speaker here, it is still with an exclusion of any other being, any other spirit from the claim of godhead besides the one infinite spirit, the one true and eternal God, the God of *Israel*; and if our Saviour *Jesus Christ* be not that one true eternal God, that one and the same infinite spirit

spirit with the Father, these exclusive sentences would hardly admit *Christ* and the Father too, to be the one true eternal God.

It is granted indeed that *Christ* is another spirit as he is man, and that other, viz. the human spirit, is not in himself properly God; but only by being united to true godhead, even the man *Jesus* may be so called by the communication of properties. But since the godhead of *Christ* is still the very same godhead with that of the Father, *Christ* is not excluded from godhead by these strong exclusive expressions.

6. When our Saviour foretold that his disciples should leave him alone, he adds, *John* xvi. 32. "And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." Now if his godhead had been distinct or different from the godhead of the Father, he needed not the presence of the Father with him for his support; his own godhead would have been all-sufficient: But if his own godhead be the same with that of the Father, then there is no difficulty in the expression.

7. There are several places in the new testament, where the words God, *Christ*, and the Lord in the same paragraph are used very promiscuously, so that one can hardly tell where *Christ* is spoken of, and where God the Father; particularly, *Rom.* xiv. 6—12. Other places where God the Father and *Christ* are called our Saviour promiscuously, and perhaps God our Saviour, &c. *Tit.* i. 3. ii. 13. *Jude* verses 4, 25. at least there is some difficulty in such places to determine which is meant; which would hardly have been left liable to so promiscuous a construction, if *Christ* had not been true God, and if his godhead had not been the same with that of the Father.

8. That the primitive christians worshipped *Christ*, is sufficiently evident from the sacred history: Yet we never find that the *jews* of that day, who were implacably set against them, ever accused them of idolatry, or creature-worship, though that charge would have best served their purpose to blast and destroy this new religion.

Nor can we reasonably suppose, that if the *jews* had made this objection, the sacred writers would have omitted to tell us so, because this would have been so important and forcible an objection against christianity, that it would have required a very particular answer, that so christians in all ages might have been taught to defend their practice.

Thence we must infer, that when the primitive christians worshipped *Christ*, they cannot be supposed to worship a mere creature, or any other but the true God of *Israel*; for the *jews* would then certainly have charged them with creature-worship or idolatry. Now this true God of *Israel* was God represented as the creator, the author, and the Father of all; it was that God who sustains the supreme character of dominion and majesty, and maintains the dignity and the rights of godhead; it was that God who so often foretold the sending of his Son *Jesus Christ*, and this is God the Father. It is therefore this one godhead, which is in the Father, which is the same with the godhead of his Son *Jesus Christ*, but under a distinct personality: It is the same one God whom the christians worshipped, when they worshipped *Christ* as God manifest in the flesh. It was the same divine nature or godhead which the ancient *jews* had been used to worship, as dwelling in the cloud of glory upon the mercy-seat, and was now come to dwell in flesh and blood, to become *Emmanuel*, "God with us, to become God manifest in the flesh." Now there is such a mutual inhabitation and personal union between the one eternal God, and a creature in the person of *Christ*, as renders this complex person a proper object of worship, and this



stands clear of idolatry, even in the sense of the *jews* themselves, who were wont to worship God as dwelling in the cloud.

And indeed this is the only notion of the worship of *Christ* that could possibly agree with their own law, and with their first commandment given in *Sinai*, and with all their own former ideas of worship, as due only to the one God: and it is the only notion that could have been received by them without difficulty and opposition. If therefore the Son or Word be truly God, this godhead must be the same in substance with the godhead of the Father whom the *jews* worshipped, otherwise he would be another God, and the *jews* could not have failed to charge the christians with gross idolatry.

Upon the whole therefore there seems just reason to conclude, that whatever sacred and unknown distinctions may be in the divine nature itself, and however these distinctions may lay a foundation for God's discovery of himself under three personal characters, as the Father, the Word, and the holy Ghost, yet the godhead of the Father seems to be the same one infinite and eternal spirit which in some particular principle or power of it's own nature, or under some peculiar distinction or relation, is united to the man *Christ Jesus*; and hereby *Jesus* becomes one with God, one complex intelligent agent or person, and hereby *Christ* comes to have a right to those divine titles, the Lord God, the almighty, *Jehovah*, the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, &c.

And by this means the great and fundamental article of all religion, the unity of the true God, is maintained inviolable: And thus we most effectually preclude all the objections and cavils of the *arian* and *socinian* writers against the doctrine of the blessed trinity, and the deity of *Christ*, as though this doctrine introduced more gods than one. For if we suppose the man *Jesus Christ* in his soul and body to be both an intellectual and corporeal *shekinah* or habitation of the one God, the God of *Israel*, we may justly call *Jesus Christ*, "God manifest in the flesh, 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. a man in whom dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily, *Col.* ii. 9. a man of the seed of *David*, and yet God over all blessed for ever," *Rom.* i. 3. ix. 5. Nor is there so much as the appearance or shadow of our owning two or three gods, which has been too often, and with some appearance of reason charged] upon some other modes of explaining this sacred doctrine.

## Q U E S T I O N V.

*Is there an intimate union between the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father?*

**T**HOUGH I do not remember that the words, unite, or union\*, are anywhere found expressly in the writings of the new testament, yet the idea which is designed by these words is often found in scripture: and it is the usual custom of the sacred writers to express this idea of the union of several things together by being

\* It is granted that *ἑνότης* or unity is twice found in the new testament, viz. *Eph.* iv. 3, 13. but *ἑνὸς* or *ἑνωσις* is not used by the sacred writers: Nor is *ἑνότης* used to signify the union of two things together into one.

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being one with another, or by one being in another, and sometimes by each being in the other mutually.

The union between the body and the soul is represented by the soul's being in the body, 2 Cor. v. 6. at home in the body; and xii. 3. "whether in the body, or out of the body, &c." The union of saints to God is expressed by mutual inbeing: 1 John iv. 16. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God dwelleth in him." Our union to *Christ* is often expressed by "*Christ* being in us and our being in *Christ*," John xv. 4, 5. Rom. xvi. 7. and being "in the Lord," verse 11. and in many other places.

Sometimes union is expressed by both being one: so the saints who are all united in one common head are called "one body and one bread," 1 Cor. x. 17. And as the union between man and wife is expressed by their "being one flesh," 1 Cor. vi. 16. "so he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit," verse 17.

The union between *Jesus Christ* and God the Father is expressed by all these ways, viz. by an inbeing of *Christ* in the Father, and the Father in him, and by oneness with the Father, in the writings of the apostle *John*. See John x. 38. "I and my Father are one." John v. 38. and xiv. 11. "I am in the Father, and the Father in me."

But let it be always remembered that our union to God or *Christ* is but a mere faint shadow or resemblance of the union of *Christ* to God the Father; which vastly surpasses our's, and is of a superior kind. This union between *Christ* and God the Father is so near, so intimate, so peculiar, as gives occasion for the new testament to cite and apply to *Christ* many passages out of the old testament: which relate to the God and Father of all. The names, the characters, the properties, and the actions of the Father are given to *Christ* in several instances and forms of expression, which are not true, nor can be admitted concerning our union to God.

Though there be but one godhead, and "one God, even the Father," 1 Cor. viii. 6. yet by the intimate union of the man *Christ Jesus* with this one godhead or divine nature which is in the Father, *Christ* is the Lord *Jehovah*, he is "God manifest in the flesh," 1 Tim. iii. 16. he is "God over all blessed for ever," Rom. ix. 5. which would be blasphemy to say concerning christians. So *Christ* is "he that searches the hearts and the reins," Rev. ii. 23. *Christ* is the "alpha and omega, the first and the last," Rev. i. 11. What the Father doth, the Son doth also in many respects: The Father created all things, so did the Son: and what the Son doth, the Father is said to do, John xiv. 10. "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works."

It may not be amiss here to transcribe a few verses from this chapter, John xiv. in order to give us a clearer idea of this union and communion between the Father and *Christ*; since it is the design of our Lord in this place to instruct *Thomas* and *Philip* in the knowledge of God the Father and of himself. John xiv. 7—11. "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: And from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8. *Philip* saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9. *Jesus* saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, *Philip*? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? 10. Believest thou not, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: But the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works. 11. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works sake." Upon this scripture I beg leave to make these three remarks.

Remark



**Remark I.** This is not spoken concerning the union, the inbeing, or indwelling of any distinct divine nature of *Christ*, in the divine nature of the Father, but rather concerning the union of his human nature to the same godhead that is in the Father; and that for these three reasons.

1. Because the disciples at this time were not particularly acquainted with any distinct divinity of *Christ*, and therefore he cannot be supposed to speak to them of this his divinity, and tell them where it was, viz. in the Father. It was as man that he conversed with them; but as a man who had God ever with him, and he is now further explaining the intimacy of this union between God and man in his own person.

2. Though the deity of *Christ* considered as the eternal word or wisdom of the Father may be said to be or dwell in the Father, yet God the Father is not said to be in his wisdom, or to dwell in his wisdom; whereas this inbeing and indwelling of *Christ* and the Father are mutual in the text, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me:" it denotes the union of two really distinct beings in one.

3. Because *Christ* makes this his union with the Father an exemplar or similitude of the union of the saints with God, *John* xvii. 21. "That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." The union and communion between the man *Jesus* and God the Father, though it is vastly superior to that of the saints, yet it is still voluntary and of mere grace, and in this respect it may be properly made use of as a very glorious exemplar of our union to God and *Christ*: But the inbeing of the eternal word or wisdom in the Father is so essential to godhead, it so infinitely transcends all his voluntary and condescending union to us, and is so infinitely different from it, that it does not seem to be a proper exemplar or pattern thereof. I much rather conclude therefore, that the union here described is the union between God the Father and the man *Christ Jesus*, or between the same divine nature which is in the Father and the human nature of *Christ*.

**Remark II.** *Jesus Christ* neither in this place nor in any other doth ever ascribe his divine works to any other divine power of his own, or to any other godhead of his own, distinct and different from the godhead of the Father. "I live by the Father, *John* xiv. 19. The Father is in me, and it is the Father in me that doth the works," *John* xiv. 10. It is but one godhead of the Father and the Son; not two divine natures or two godheads, for this would seem to make two gods. Nor has the holy Spirit to whom sometimes *Christ* ascribes his works, any godhead different from that of the Father.

**Remark III.** Let it be observed further, that when our Saviour tells his disciples, and particularly informs *Thomas* and *Philip*, that by "seeing and knowing the Son, they see and know the Father also," he does not give this reason for it, viz. that he is the very image of the Father, or the representative or the vicegerent of the Father, though those are great truths: but he gives this reason, that there is a most intimate union or oneness between the Father and him. "I am in the Father and the Father in me:" and so near and so intimate is this union, that he attributes the words which he speaks and the works which he does to the Father, verse 10. that is, to the godhead of the Father dwelling in him. Thus "*Christ* and his Father are one," *John* x. 30. One godhead belongs to both.

From all this we may reasonably infer, that when the names, titles and works of the true and eternal God are prophetically attributed to *Jesus Christ* under the old testament, or historically in the new, it is not so much because his human soul

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is the image, representative or deputy of the Father, as the *Arians* say; but because the very godhead of the Father dwells personally in the man *Jesus*: "the fulness of the godhead dwells in him bodily," *Col. ii. 9.* so as on some occasions to give a sufficient ground for the representation of *Christ* as god-man, or one complex person including a divine and human nature; though on other occasions *Christ* is represented as a man, and is called "the man *Christ Jesus* the mediator," as in *1 Tim. ii. 5.*

And as we find divine names and characters are given to *Christ* at and after his incarnation, because "the fulness of the godhead dwelt bodily in the man *Jesus*," *Col. ii. 9.* and thereby he became "God manifest in the flesh," *1 Tim. iii. 16.* so before his incarnation, when the angel of the Lord who appeared to the patriarchs calls himself the Lord, God, *Jehovah*, God almighty, and the God of *Abraham*, we very reasonably account for it in the same manner, viz. That the fulness of the godhead dwelt in him spiritually, that is, that there was the human spirit of our blessed Saviour in his pre-existent or angelic state, inhabited by the great and almighty God, and composing as it were one complex person, one complex intelligent agent in those appearances.

Objection. But does not this represent *Christ* as being the Father? Doth not this suppose God the Father to be incarnate, which is contrary to the common expressions of scripture, and sense of the primitive church?

Answer I. Almost all the protestant writers that have been counted most orthodox for some hundreds of years past, both in foreign countries and at home, have universally supposed the very same numerical godhead of the Father to be the godhead of the Son: and that it is the same infinite spirit, the same understanding and the same will, which exists in the Father with one relative property, that is also incarnate in the Son with another relative property: Only they suppose the superadded idea or relative property of fatherhood is not incarnate, but the superadded relative property of sonship. Now I cannot reasonably fear any just censures from those who follow this doctrine of all our reformed predecessors, because their opinion comes so very near to, or rather is the same with what I have asserted, though they add some human phrases to it, of which I have not yet been able to attain any ideas.

Answer II. Though the same numerical godhead belong to the Father and to the Son, yet it is not proper to say, the Father is incarnate, because the idea of fatherhood superadded to the godhead, includes the idea of the prime agent, and supreme ruler in the divine oeconomy; whereas the idea of incarnation belongs properly to one that is sent in order to become a mediator between God and man, and this belongs properly to the Son, as I shall shew immediately.

Answer III. Though in general we may suppose the very godhead of the Father to be united to the man *Christ Jesus*, according to these expressions in the tenth and fourteenth of *John*, and elsewhere, yet some have supposed there are other scriptures which represent *Christ* in his divine nature, as the word or wisdom of the Father, as a peculiar essential principle of self-manifestation in the divine nature: And if scripture does represent the great God under the peculiar idea or character of his wisdom or word, as manifesting itself in flesh, it is not so proper to say, God the Father was incarnate, but that the word or wisdom of God was made flesh, though the godhead of the Word is the same with that of the Father; for the wisdom of God is God. But I insist not on this answer, and therefore proceed.

Answer IV. The pre-existent soul of *Christ*, in whom the divine nature or godhead always dwelt, is properly the Son of God, derived from the Father before all worlds,



worlds, as his only begotten Son, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." *Heb. i. 3.* And this glorious human soul who lived many ages, in an angelic state, and was the angel of God's presence, does seem to be the more immediate subject of incarnation. This Son of God properly took flesh upon him, and, shall I say, became as it were a medium, in and by which the divine nature of godhead was united to flesh and blood. Thus *Christ* is properly called God manifest in the flesh, because true godhead always dwelt in this human soul who is now incarnate: and he is properly called the Son of God manifest in the flesh, or *Christ* come in the flesh, because this human soul, who was properly the Son of God, was more immediately the subject of union to flesh and blood. And thus the expressions of *St. Paul* and *St. John* are reconciled, *1 Tim. iii. 16.* "God was manifest in the flesh:" and *1 John iii. 8.* "The Son of God was manifested;" and *1 John iv. 2.* "*Jesus Christ* is come in the flesh."

This sort of exposition of these texts wherein *Jesus Christ* and God the Father are represented as one, or as mutually inbeing and indwelling in each other, seems more exactly agreeable to the whole tenor of scripture, and best maintains the unity of the godhead, which is the foundation of all religion both natural and revealed; nor is it liable to those cavils, objections and inconveniencies with which other expositions are attended.

This exposition is free from those obscurities which attend the mutual inbeing and indwelling of the Father and the Son considered purely in their divine natures, which the learned have called *μετὰ ἑαυτοῦ* and circum-incession. We can hardly suppose our Saviour intended that notion in *John xiv. 7, &c.* because it is a notion so mysterious and sublime beyond all the ideas that *Philip* and *Thomas* could frame at that season: And therefore we cannot imagine that *Christ* would go to amuse them with these insearchables, when they desired some instruction from him in the knowledge of God the Father.

This account of things plainly, intelligibly, and effectually secures true, proper, and eternal deity to God the Father, and to our blessed Saviour, and that in two distinct persons, without introducing any other godhead besides the godhead of the Father. Thus God the Father is the only true God originally, and yet *Jesus* the Son of God, by union to, and communion in the godhead of the Father, is also "the true God and the eternal life," *1 John v. 20.* "And this is eternal life to know the Father the only true God, and *Jesus Christ* whom he hath sent," *John xvii. 3.*

QUESTION

Q U E S T I O N VI.

*Is Christ the express image of God the Father in the human nature, or in the divine?*

A N S W E R.

*In the human nature.*

**I**N several places of Scripture our Saviour is represented as the image of God: 2 Cor. iv. 4. "*Christ, who is the image of God.*" Col. i. 15. "*The image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature.*" Heb. i. 3. "*The brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, whom he hath appointed heir of all things.*" Now it is an important enquiry what is the scripture sense in which *Jesus Christ* is the image of God the Father.

It has been the custom of many theological writers to suppose *Christ* in his pure divine nature to be this image of the Father to which the scripture refers: but there are some reasons which seem to oppose this opinion, and incline me to withhold my assent from it at present.

1. That our protestant divines have almost universally supposed the godhead or divine nature of *Christ* to be the self-same, entire, numerical godhead, nature or essence which the Father has, and differing only in his personality, or manner of subsistence, that is, filiation; whereas the Father's manner of subsistence is paternity. Now, according to this doctrine, the divine nature of *Christ* can neither be the image of the Father in his essence, nor in his personality and subsistence.

The divine nature of *Christ* cannot be the image of the Father's essence, because it is numerically the very same essence, and nothing is said to be the image of itself.

Neither can the peculiar subsistence or personality of *Christ* as God, be the image of the Father's personality or subsistence; for sonship or filiation is by no means an image of paternity or fatherhood, but is rather the very reverse, or contrary to it. A derived manner of subsistence can never be the express image of an underived manner of subsistence.

If therefore the person of *Christ* considered as God, be the same numerical godhead with the Father, together with a distinct personality, that is, filiation, and if he is neither the image of the Father's godhead nor his personality; then, *Christ*, considered merely in his divine nature, cannot be the express image of the Father.

2. Another reason why *Christ* as God, is not the image of God the Father, is because he is called the image of the invisible God. Now the godhead of *Christ* is as much invisible as the Father's godhead is; and therefore when he is called the image



of the invisible God, it must signify, he is that image whereby God becomes visible, or is made known to men; and for this reason this title of *Christ* must include such a nature in *Christ* whereby the invisible God is made known to mankind, that is, it must include something of his inferior or human nature, and perhaps has a prime reference thereto.

3. When *Christ* is called the image of God in some scriptures, it would naturally lead us to conceive him distinct from, and in some sense inferior to that God whose image he is; and therefore it doth as naturally lead one to conceive *Christ's* godhead is not denoted in those scriptures; for the godhead of *Christ* and the Father is one, whereas the image is something inferior to the original.

Let it be noted also, that every man is called the image of God, 1 *Cor.* xi. 7. And therefore this seems to be too low a character of *Christ*, considered in his pure godhead.

But there are three senses in which *Christ* is the most noble image of God.

1. This title most admirably agrees to *Christ* considered as man: His human soul is the first, the greatest, the wisest, the holiest, and the best of all created spirits: The man *Jesus* is the wisest, holiest, and best of men, formed after the image of God in the greatest perfection; and probably his human soul in his pre-existent state was the first-born of every creature, and the beginning or chief of the creation of God, and who hath more of resemblance to God in all natural and in all moral perfections than any man ever had, or than the whole creation besides.

2. And if it be further considered that this glorious man *Jesus Christ* even in his pre-existent, as well as in his incarnate state, is intimately united to his divine nature, that is, to the same godhead that belongs to the Father, or to the eternal Word or wisdom of God; then the very perfections of God himself shine through the human nature of *Christ*, in a most resplendent manner: *Christ* as God-man is indeed the brightness of his Father's glory, and the most express image of his person: and in this sense it may be granted that *Christ* is such an image of God as to be also God himself, "God manifest in the flesh, 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. God over all blessed for ever," *Rom.* ix. 5.

Thus far we have seen in what sense *Christ* may be called the image of God the Father, in the very constitution of his person: Let us also now consider him,

3. In his character of mediator; and so he becomes the image of the invisible God in yet a farther sense. He is the Father's ambassador to us, and in that sense he is the image of God, since he represents God among men. He is also king of kings and Lord of lords, vested with a sovereign dominion over all things by the appointment of the Father; and therefore he may be called the express image of his Father's person, as he is appointed heir and Lord of all things: And as *Adam* was the image of God, in his dominion over creatures in this world, so *Christ* is a much more glorious image of God the Father in his dominion over the upper and lower worlds.

Thus, though our blessed Saviour considered in his pure godhead or divine nature cannot be so properly called the image of the invisible God, or the express image of the Father, yet considered, 1. as man, 2. as God-man, or 3. as mediator, those ascriptions may very properly belong to him.

NOTE,

NOTE, In another treatise which will be published in a few months, concerning the glory of *Christ* as God-man,\* and the pre-existence of his human soul, there will be an abridgment of a larger discourse of the reverend doctor *Goodwin's*, concerning "the glories and royalties of *Jesus Christ* considered as God-man, and of his being the express image of the Father."

## Q U E S T I O N. VII.

*Are the worship of God and his Son Jesus Christ consistent with one another?*

1. **G**OD is a spirit, that is, a being who has understanding and will; infinite in knowledge, and in power, and in every perfection.

2. There is but one only living and true God, that is, one infinite spirit. And I express myself thus, lest if we suppose more infinite spirits than one, we should give occasion to say, we believed more gods than one. Three infinite spirits seem to me to be three gods.

3. This one true God is the only proper object of divine or religious worship. This doctrine was asserted by *Moses*, supported by the prophets, and confirmed by the Lord *Jesus Christ* himself.

4. In scripture *Christ* expressly calls God the Father the only true God, as distinct from himself; *John* xvii. 3. And the apostle *Paul* confirms it, "To us there is but one God, even the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord *Jesus Christ*, by whom are all things." *1 Cor.* viii. 6.

5. *Jesus Christ*, who is the Son of God, is evidently represented in scripture as another distinct spirit different from God the Father, both before and after his incarnation.

Before his incarnation he had a distinct consciousness or understanding, whereby he knew and was conscious of his own appointment to various services and his own mission by the Father; he knew all the offices he himself was to sustain, the flesh and blood he was to take upon him, and the work that he was sent to do by the Father's appointment. These personal consciousnesses of *Christ* are all different from the personal or individual consciousnesses of God the Father. *Christ* had also a distinct will, different from the Father, whereby he consented to what the Father's will ordained concerning him, he accepted of the mediatorial office at the Father's hand, and by his own will submitted to that incarnation which the will of the Father appointed for him: All this before he was actually incarnate. "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God; a body hast thou prepared me." *Psal.* xl. 6. *Heb.* x. 5.

As for his appearance after his incarnation, it is sufficiently evident he is another distinct spirit, different from the true and eternal God the Father; for he was con-

\* This was published 1746.



scious of his wearing flesh and blood, and of all the sensations of hunger, thirst, and pain, which he derived thence: He was then complete man in body and soul, who knew and worshipped and obeyed his Father and his God. His own words confirm this: "I came not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me," *John* vi. 38. "Father, not my will, but thine be done," *Luke* xxii. 42.

6. Yet this Son of God often appears in scripture as the object of divine or religious worship. It is thus in some places of the old testament, when he appeared as the angel of God's presence; for *Abraham*, *Moses* and *Josua* worshipped him as the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, and as *Jehovah*, and as the captain of the host of the Lord: and in *Psal.* xlv. 11. we are required to worship him; "He is thy Lord, and worship thou him."

And that we have several examples of worship paid to our Lord *Jesus Christ* in the new testament, especially after his resurrection and his ascension, is evident from the writings of the evangelists and the apostles. *St. Stephen* worshipped him, "Lord *Jesus* receive my spirit," *Acts* vii. 59. and *St. Paul*, *2 Cor.* xii. 8. "For this I besought the Lord thrice." And all the saints and angels in heaven do worship him, *Rev.* v. 12, 13.

7. Thence it must follow that *Jesus Christ* the Son of God, though he be an distinct spirit, yet he must be some way one with the true and eternal God, that he may be a proper object of religious or divine worship. Thus he expresses himself, *John* x. 30. "I and my Father are one." He must be some way the same God, or the same infinite spirit with the Father, while he is also another distinct inferior spirit, different from the Father.

8. Scripture does not teach us to conceive how this can be, but by so near an union between this supreme or infinite spirit and the inferior or finite spirit, as may constitute one compounded person, one complex agent or principle of action, one complex object of honour, that is, God and man. And thus the Son of God seems to be represented often in scripture as a complex person, or as two distinct spirits or beings in a personal union.

In the old testament he is the man who conversed with *Abraham* and who wrestled with *Jacob*; he is the angel of the covenant, the angel in whom the name of God is, the angel of the presence of God, or a messenger sent from God, and yet he is also the *Jehovah*, the God of *Abraham* and *Isaac*, the "I am that I am". He is spoken of as the child born, the Son given; and yet the mighty God, and the holy one whom the angels adore.

He is represented also in the new testament as the man that died, rose, and ascended to heaven; and also as the *Jehovah* or God of *Israel*, who is described in the lxxviii. *Psal.* compared with *Ephes.* iv. 8. as "ascending on high, leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men. He is God manifest in the flesh, *1 Tim.* iii. 16. or a man in whom dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily, *Col.* ii. 9. He is the Word who was with God, who was God, and who was made flesh, and tabernacled among men," *John* i. 1, 14.

Now this near, intimate and unspeakable union between the man *Jesus* and one eternal God lays a sufficient foundation for divine names, titles, attributes, worship and honours to be ascribed to *Jesus Christ* the Son of God. He and the Father are one, *John* x. 30. that is, so united, that one godhead is in both by this union. He is in the Father, and the Father in him. It is the Father in him that doth his wonderful works,

works. *John* xiv. 10. "He was in the beginning with the Father : The Word was with God, and the Word was God," *John* i. 1.

9. With regard to the blessed Spirit of God, though I think true godhead is ascribed to him, and personal actions are sometimes attributed to him in scripture, yet as we are not expressly, plainly, and particularly informed, whether he be a really distinct principle or power in God or has a proper distinct personality of himself, so neither are we expressly required to worship him in any text of the bible that I can find. Nevertheless, as divine attributes and actions, and sometimes personal characters are ascribed to the Spirit of God in the language of scripture, I think the reason of things sufficiently authorizes and allows religious or divine worship to be paid to him, though we may not precisely know the manner how he is God, or how far he is a distinct person.

10. What particular distinctions may be in the godhead or divine nature itself, and how great these distinctions may be, scripture does not so evidently assert, nor so clearly explain them to us. And in this place I would not on the one hand go beyond scripture, nor on the other hand would I talk without ideas. But so far as I have represented this matter of divine worship, I think there are ideas, and those borrowed from scripture too, which go along with my words all the way; and I must acknowledge this is the clearest conception I can arrive at in representing this subject, after many years study of the scripture, and much prayer for divine instruction.

11. If we could once persuade ourselves to try to read every scripture that relates to the doctrine of the trinity as placed in this light, without any prejudicate opinions derived from other human schemes, I think that doctrine would be found much more easy and intelligible than it is generally made; and the worship of the only true God would stand ascertained and confirmed; and yet *Jesus Christ* the Son of God being one with the Father, or being God and man in one complex person, might become the object of religious worship, according to the representations of scripture, and without any offence to human reason.

12. If this be the true state of things, then the one eternal God abides still the only object of worship; whether he be considered as absolute in himself under the character of the Father of all, or as united to the man *Jesus Christ*, and dwelling in him by a personal union. Thus the Father and the Son are both worshipped, but when the Son is worshipped, it is as one with the Father, and to the glory of the Father, *Phil.* ii. 11.

And among other reasons this is one, "why it has pleased the Father that all the fullness of the godhead should dwell in him bodily," *Col.* i. 19. ii. 9. that being so nearly united to God, or one with him, he might be a proper object of divine worship together with the Father. *Rev.* v. 14. "Blessing and honour, and glory and power be to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the lamb for ever."



## Q U E S T I O N VIII.

*What is the worship paid to our blessed Saviour, who is the image of God?*

Proposition I. **T**HERE is something in the reason and nature of man that directs and inclines him to own and worship some God, or some superior being, from whom himself and all his enjoyments are derived, and on whom his expectations depend.

Proposition II. Reason and revelation conspire to teach us that there is but one true God.

Proposition III. This one true God has required expressly in his word, that he alone should be the object of our worship or religious homage: and it is several times repeated with much solemnity in the old testament and in the new.

Proposition IV. There is something in the nature of man that inclines him to reverence and respect the image of that being which he worships: And the reason is evident; because the image is supposed to be something more within the reach of his senses, and therefore more suited to his bodily nature, than God who is the spiritual and unseen object of his worship: or at least, because he can have the image sensibly present with him when he has not the original: and the image being supposed to have the likeness or resemblance of the original object of worship, it refreshes the memory and brings to mind the excellencies of the divine original.

If we love or honour a friend, a father, or a king, we desire to have their pictures or images near us, we pay a sort of esteem, love and veneration to those pictures, upon the account of their likeness to the original persons: and we also pay our esteem, love and veneration to the absent original by the means or medium of these pictures.

It is from this principle that the heathens in all nations, who have worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, or their kings, heroes and ancestors, have generally made pictures and images of them, and either revered and worshipped the images or worshipped the originals in and by those images, or both. And for this reason, in the corrupt antichristian state, they did not only worship the beast with seven heads and ten horns, but they made an image thereof and worshipped it. *Rev. xiii.*

14, 15.

Proposition V. God has expressly forbidden men to make any image of himself and worship it, or even to make it a medium of paying their religious homage and worship to himself. The second command is most express in this matter; and this is in general esteemed by all protestant writers to be the plain sense of that commandment: And one chief reason of the command is because mankind is so prone by nature to worship images which they have made themselves.

Proposition VI. God himself has never shewn or given us any express image of himself but one, and that is his own well-beloved Son *Jesus Christ*. *Heb. i. 2.* "He is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person." "He

is

is the image of God," 2 Cor. iv. 4. And in Col. i. 15. "He is the image of the invisible God." Now this expression seems to have a prime reference to his human nature; or, as the learned and pious doctor Goodwin asserts and proves, it must at least include his human nature in it, because every thing that relates directly to the divine nature of *Christ* is as invisible as God the Father, and therefore his divine nature considered alone would never have been so particularly described as the image of the invisible God.

Proposition VII. The great God himself has required us to make this his image the medium of our worship paid to him. Eph. ii. 18. "By him we have access unto the Father." Col. iii. 17. "Give thanks to God even the Father by him." And he also requires men and angels to worship this his image. John v. 23. "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." Heb. i. 6. "Let all the angels of God worship him." Thus far has the blessed God indulged or encouraged that natural inclination in man to reverence the image of that divine being which he worships.

Proposition VIII. To this end it has pleased the great God in a special manner to assume into the nearest union with himself this his own Son, and thereby to render him a more complete image of himself: Thus the Son, who is the express image of the Father and the brightness or splendor of his glory, Heb. i. 3. is also one with the Father, as *Christ* expresses it, John xiv. 10. "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." And the reason he gives is this, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." John x. 30. "I and my Father are one," that is, by this union, as it is explained verse 38. And this is done not only to render him capable of his glorious offices, but of divine honours too; that *Jesus Christ* might be worshipped, and yet that according to God's original command, that which is not God might not be made the object of our worship.

Since there cannot be more gods than one, and since proper deity could not be communicated to the man *Jesus*, who is the image of the invisible God, to render him a partaker of our worship any other way, therefore proper deity is united to him that he might be one with God. And thus as the Word who was God was made flesh, John i. 1, 14. by his personal union to flesh, so the man *Jesus* may be said to become God, or to be God, by his personal union to God.

Thus the human nature of *Christ* being a creature most like to God, and being inhabited also by godhead, is the brightest image of the invisible God, and is one with God himself, and that as our divines express it by a personal union: And thus he is taken into as much participation of that worship which men pay to God, as a creature is capable of receiving, and as the original law of worshipping none but God can admit. See dissertation III. from page 533—544.

Proposition IX. When the ancient heathens worshipped the images of their gods, the best way they could ever take to vindicate it was under this notion, that they supposed their gods to inhabit their own images, and thus they worshipped the image together with their God dwelling in the image: but with far better authority and with infinitely more justice and truth may christians worship the Son of God who is the only appointed image of the only true God, subsisting in a personal union with the indwelling godhead.

Proposition X. This may be illustrated by a very lively similitude. A vast hollow globe of crystal, as large as the sun, is in itself a fair image or resemblance of the sun:

But



But if we might suppose the sun itself included in this crystal globe, it would thereby become a much brighter and nobler image of the sun, and it would be in a sense one with the sun itself, or one complex being. And thus the same honourable ascriptions which are given to the sun because of his light and heat, might be given also to this crystal globe considered as inhabited by the sun itself, which could not be done without this inhabitation.

Then whatsoever honours were paid to this globe of crystal would redound to the honour of the sun, even as the divine honour and adoration paid to our blessed Saviour arises from the personal union of the human nature with the divine, and finally redounds to the glory of God. *Phil. ii. 11.*

Let it be observed here, that though I borrow an emblem or a resemblance of this divine doctrine from the world of nature or from the heathen nations, yet the doctrine itself is entirely derived from scripture, and might easily be confirmed by many more citations out of the sacred writers.

A N  
E S S A Y

On the

True IMPORTANCE of any HUMAN  
SCHEMES

To explain the Sacred

Doctrine of the Trinity.

S H E W I N G,

- I. THAT no such scheme of EXPLICATION is necessary to fal-  
vation.
- II. THAT it may yet be of great use to the christian church.
- III. BUT all such EXPLICATIONS ought to be proposed with  
modesty to the world, and never imposed on the conscience.



# ESSAYS

THE IMPORTANCE OF ANY HUMAN  
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VOL. VI.

## S E C T I O N I.

**T**HE first of these points is already argued in a discourse on the "Christian doctrine of the trinity," proposition XV. See page 461—464. and we only take leave here to mention those heads of argument, and to enlarge a little on the same subject.

1. "Any particular explication of the scriptural doctrine of the trinity can never be necessary to salvation, because, though the doctrine itself of three personal characters which have communion in one godhead, be clearly revealed, yet the *modus* how they are one, and how they are three, is not clearly and plainly revealed." And indeed if this *modus* be revealed at all in scripture, yet it is in so obscure a manner, that we can come at it only by laborious reasonings and a train of difficult consequences; whereas all necessary articles are and must be clear and plain: and if they are not contained in exprefs words, yet they must lie open and obvious to a natural and easy inference.

2. Any particular explication of this mystery is not necessary to salvation, because "the most pious as well as the wisest and most learned christians have had very different sentiments on this subject, and gone into different schemes of explication;" and that in the several ages of christianity, as well as in our present age. The very mention of the venerable names and opinions of doctor *Cudworth*, bishop *Bull*, bishop *Stillingfleet*, bishop *Fowler*, bishop *Pearson*, doctor *Wallis*, doctor *Owen*, and Mr. *Howe*, is sufficient to confirm this second reason.

3. "We may pay all due honours to the sacred three, which are required in scripture, while we believe them to be represented as three personal agents, and as one in godhead, without any particular explication how they are one, and how they are three."

Now it is evident that scripture hath more directly and exprefsly laid our salvation upon the special divine characters or offices which the Father, Son, and Spirit sustain in the bible, and upon the peculiar blessings which we derive from them, and the peculiar honours to be paid to them, rather than upon any nice explication of their intimate essence and union, their nature and difference; and therefore such a nice explication is not of necessity to salvation.

It is evident to me, that divine and religious ascriptions and honours are paid to the Father, Son and holy Spirit in scripture, and I think they are due to them all. Now how these divine honours can be paid by any who deny them to have some true and proper communion in the eternal godhead, I cannot well understand. But I can easily conceive that divine honour may be given them without knowing exactly the precise points and boundaries of their union and distinction. See more in "christian doctrine of the trinity," proposition XXI. page 485—489.



Do we not find it sufficient in all the common affairs of life, to manage a thousand concerns wisely with regard to the human soul and body, and with regard to each particular being of the animal, the vegetable, and the intellectual world, if we do but just know whether it be an animal, a vegetable, or an intellectual being, without any determinate, philosophical notions and ideas of the essences and specific differences of all, or any of these, and without determining how far they agree, and how far they differ? And why may it not be so in the affairs of religion? He may be a very wise man, and dispose and direct his affairs admirably well with regard to his king, his bishop, his father and his friend, by that common and general knowledge which he hath of their capacities and powers, their several offices and the relations they stand in to him, without any precise acquaintance with their particular natural constitutions, or the relations they stand in to one another. He may be a most discreet manager of his affairs, and speak and do all things in proper time and place, without knowing philosophically what place is, or what is time: and he can be contented with this ignorance, and be a wise man still. And why may he not be a christian with the same degrees of knowledge of the things of christianity, that is, without philosophical science of the abstract nature of God and *Christ*.

A poor labourer or a shepherd believes *Jesus Christ* to have the proper divine powers of knowing, managing and governing all things; therefore he prays to him, and trusts in him as his Lord and his God, without any notion either of self-existence and independency, or without the least thought of consubstantial generation, eternal sonship, and necessary emanation from the Father; all which ideas some writers include in the divine nature of *Christ*, though perhaps without any sufficient authority from scripture. He believes him to be the true God, and Son of God, and the appointed mediator to bring him to God; therefore he honours and adores him, and depends on him under that character, without any notion whether his sonship belong to his human or divine nature. He believes him also to be the son of man, but perhaps he may not ever have heard whether he had an earthly Father or no, or that he was the son of a pure virgin. Now what is there in all this ignorance that forbids him to be a true christian and a sound believer?

But I would pursue this argument a little, under some more parallel instances.

The learned world well knows what corporeal notions the famous ancient father *Tertullian* had of the soul of man; what immaterial and refined opinions *Des Cartes* and his followers have entertained concerning the presence or place of spirits; and what were the contrary sentiments of doctor *Henry More* and his admirers.

Now may not a *tertullianist* take proper care for the salvation of his soul, though he thinks the nature of it be corporeal? May not the soul of a *cartesian* find the right way to heaven, though he believes his soul has no relation to place, and exists no where, or in no certain place? May he not worship God with acceptance in spirit and in truth, though he conceive God himself, as an infinitely wise and powerful mind void of all extension, and who hath no relation to place? And though he suppose his omnipresence to be nothing else but his universal knowledge and power and agency, through all times and places? And may not a *moreist* with the same acceptance worship the same God, though he believes him to be infinitely extended and penetrating all bodies and all possible spaces?

What is there in these philosophical particularities, that forbids a man to be truly pious, while he believes his soul to have an immortal being after this life, and while.

while he supposes God to have all the requisite properties and powers for a Creator and governor, and judge of the world?

You will say, some of these persons hold gross inconsistencies, and believe impossibles, while they suppose "a corporeal soul to be immortal; or a God infinitely extended through length, breadth and depth, who is a pure spirit:" and therefore such a soul cannot be immortal, and such a God cannot know, or govern, or judge.

I answer, It may possibly be so: These may be great inconsistencies; and yet a man may sincerely believe them both, who does not see the inconsistency of them. And if we must be condemned to hell for believing inconsistencies, then we be to every son and daughter of *Adam*. What man is there in the world free from all error? And yet every error which he holds, is perhaps inconsistent with some truth which he believes: It is hard to write anathema upon a man's forehead, because of some inconsistency in his opinions, while he believes all necessary truths, and practises all the necessary duties relating to God and *Christ*, and his own soul.

You may perhaps object and say, that he that believes the soul to be corporeal, by consequence does not believe it to be immortal; or he that believes God to be infinitely extended in length and breadth, by consequence does not believe God to be a spiritual being, who can know and judge human affairs: And thus in the same manner by the consequence of his own suppositions, the man that holds these doctrines may perhaps be proved to be a brute and an atheist.

I reply, And must all the consequences that can be drawn from the mistakes of any man be imputed to that man as his own opinions? This would make dreadful work in the christian church. The *arminian* would reduce the *calvinist* into blasphemy and atheism; and likewise the *calvinist* the *arminian*. By this uncharitable method each of them would be called atheists and blasphemers, and be utterly excluded from christian communion by such a perverse practice as this.

I would add yet further, that by such uncharitable constructions as these, the *cartesian* christian might say, I cannot join in worship with doctor *More*, and his followers, for we have not the same object of worship: I worship a God who is a pure spirit, a pure thinking being, without extension or dimension; but they worship a being infinitely extended, that is, infinitely long, broad and deep. The *morist* might cry with the same zeal, I cannot worship with a *cartesian*, for we worship not the same object: He adores a God that is properly in no place; but I worship that God who penetrates all things and places, and is expanded through all.

Now if such objections as these are indulged and supported, no two persons could join together in any part of divine worship who had such different ideas of the divine essence or attributes, lest they should imagine they worship two distinct or different deities. And if this were admitted, where could we find two persons who had so exactly the same ideas of God as to hold communion in one worship?

This wretched practice of imputing all the distant consequences of any man's opinions or mistakes to him, is quite contrary to our Saviour's general rule, *Matth. vii. 12*. "What you would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Let these objectors be pleased to consider that doubtless they themselves in some parts of their religion are guilty of some errors or mistakes in their opinions; for no man's knowledge is perfect: And if those errors should be pushed home to their utmost consequences, perhaps they might terminate in blasphemy, atheism, or mere nonsense: But no man would be willing to be treated in this manner himself, viz. to have all the utmost consequences of his mistaken opinions be imputed to him, there-



therefore he ought not to treat his brothers so; according to that universal rule, "What ye would that men should do unto you, that do ye also to them," *Matth. vii. 12.*

Now to apply these things to the present case. Suppose, for instance, *Timon* and *Pithus* both believe *Christ* to be the true God; but *Timon* supposes him not to be self-existent, because he saith, he is a Son, derived from the Father by an eternal generation. On the other hand, *Pithus* believes him to be self-existent, because he is God. Now has *Pithus* reason to say, that because *Timon* doth not believe the self-existence of *Christ*, therefore by consequence he does not believe his divinity? Or, should *Timon* be permitted to conclude, that because *Pithus* believes the self-existence of *Christ*, therefore by consequence he does not believe his sonship? Would it be agreeable either to the reason of a man, or to the charity of a christian, that these two men should anathematize one another, or exclude each other from christian communion because of the consequences of their opinions, while they both profess to maintain that *Jesus Christ* is the Son of God, and has such communion in and with the eternal godhead, as that both of them profess him to be true God, and both pay him divine worship.

Now what I would infer from hence is this, that since the different explications of the doctrine of the trinity may be so abused to give such occasions for contest, where christians are not wise and charitable, I would rather exclude all the particular modes of explication from the terms of christian communion, than I would exclude one christian from the church of *Christ*. Where a man professes that there is but one God, and yet that Father, Son and Spirit, have such a distinction from each other, and such a communion in and with this one godhead as renders them all-sufficient for the characters and offices which they sustain in the gospel, and pays proper honours to them accordingly, I would never constrain him to determine any farther upon these difficult points of the union and distinction of the sacred three; of the self-existence, the eternal generation, or eternal procession of the Son and holy Spirit. Not whether they are three natures united in one godhead, or whether one individual nature only.

To sum up the whole, it is evident to me, that the holy scripture itself, as I have already proved elsewhere, lays the stress of our salvation upon a belief that *Christ* is the *Messiah*, the appointed all-sufficient Saviour, a trust in the proper atonement or sacrifice of *Christ* for the forgiveness of sins, a dependence on his grace and Spirit for light and holiness, and a submission to his government, much more than it does upon any precise and exact notions or hypotheses concerning his divine and his human nature; even though the union of the divine and the human nature in him are in my judgment necessary to render his salvation complete.

Scripture teaches us to concern ourselves about regeneration and grace to be received from the blessed Spirit, more than about the nature or essence of that Spirit which regenerates us. It makes our eternal interest depend upon the glorious characters, offices and operations of the three persons of the blessed trinity, and our respective honours paid to them, rather than upon our philosophical and exact acquaintance with their inmost essence or essences, and their personal distinctions. I must believe that the great God will make merciful allowances to sincere souls for their different sentiments, or for their ignorance and darkness in so sublime and mysterious an article, which almost all parties allow to contain some unknowables and unconceivables in it.

S E C T I O N II.

**Y**ET where God is pleased to give greater degrees of light and knowledge, if we can further explain these mysteries of christianity in clear ideas and proper language, it is a piece of excellent service done to the gospel of *Christ*."

A clear and happy explication in what manner the Father, Son and holy Spirit are to be conceived as three personal agents, and as having communion in one godhead, would carry in it many desirable advantages.

1. This would be like a ray of sacred light let into some of the most dark and difficult passages of the word of God. This would help us to unfold many scriptures which at present lie sealed in obscurity; or at least it would afford us the true sense of several texts which by reason of the various expositions of them have hitherto given but an uncertain sound and doubtful notices of divine truth. It would clear up a large part of the word of God to our understandings, and teach us to read the sacred transactions of the Father, Son and Spirit in the bible with more abundant edification.

2. This might teach us to perform our various duties of adoration, faith, love, and obedience to the sacred three, so far as scripture requires it, in a more distinct and rational manner than we have hitherto done. The humble christian would view and adore his heavenly Father, his Saviour and his Sanctifier with much more inward pleasure, when he should be enabled to do it with much clearer and more explicit ideas of their divine unity and distinction.

3. Such a happy explication of the mystery of the blessed trinity would vindicate this doctrine against the cavils of the unbeliever as well as against the scoffery and insults of the prophane world. This would make it appear how the Son and the Spirit might be true God without injury to the divine honour of God the Father.

There have been some antitrinitarian writers who have denied the possibility of the godhead of the Son and Spirit in any sense or modus at all; and have pretended to prove that every model and manner of explication of this doctrine hath some absurdity and inconsistency belonging to it. Now it would be certainly of considerable service to the truth to exhibit some scheme, some manner of explication to the world, wherein it is fairly consistent with the reason of things and the language of scripture, that the Son and Spirit may have communion in true godhead as well as the Father: And that though there be but one God, yet the divine names and attributes may be ascribed to the sacred three, as having communion in this one godhead.

4. This would be a glorious means of vindicating the protestant religion against the charges which are brought by the papists, who tell us, that we refuse their doctrine of transubstantiation because it seems inconsistent to sense and reason, and yet we believe the doctrine of the trinity which is charged with the same inconsistency. We often find fault with them for making the words *mystery* and *supernatural* an asylum and refuge whereby to screen themselves from the charge of a most absurd opinion, that is, "of bread becoming flesh, and yet retaining the properties of bread at the same time." They in the like manner find fault with us for making the same words *mystery* and *supernatural* a refuge for ourselves, while we profess three distinct persons in one God.

I confess there are many things to be said, and that with great justice, to vindicate the conduct of protestant writers in the doctrine of the trinity, which can never serve to defend the popish doctrine of transubstantiation: for one is a theme or subject that



that concerns the deep things of the divine nature; the other relates but to flesh and bread, which are objects that fall entirely within the compass of our senses and our reasoning powers; and we can much better judge and determine what is and what is not a real inconsistency in the one than in the other.

Yet after all it would be a vast advantage in the defence of our religion against the assaults of the papists, and it would vindicate christianity most gloriously in the eyes of jews, heathens and all infidels, if we could find some plain, easy, natural and obvious account of this matter how the sacred three which are represented in scripture under distinct personal characters have a communion in one godhead.

5. I add farther, that if it were possible to exhibit a scheme of explication which should be so plain, so easy, so agreeable to the light of nature, and yet so happily correspondent with scripture as to captivate the assent of the learned and unlearned at the very proposal of it, what a glorious advantage would the church of *Christ* obtain by this means towards it's unity and peace! What a blessed end would be put to those shameful quarrels and contentions on this subject, that have in every age more or less divided the christian world and laid it bleeding with many wounds?

There are some difficult parts of our holy religion which have been so far explained by the united labours and prayers of pious and learned men, that controversies about them are well nigh ceased, and the disputes brought to an end. The humble believer has been enlightened and taught to understand the articles which he professes: The profane caviller and the subtil critic have been baffled by the mere force of argument set in a clear and easy light: and why may we not hope for the same success in this sacred article of the trinity, by humble and laborious enquiries into the word of God, with a dependence on the aids of the divine Spirit, who is promised to "guide us into all truth?" *John* xvi. 13.

It must be acknowledged indeed, there has no public received scheme been yet so successful to explain this doctrine but what has several difficulties attending it, and has left too much room for the cavil of unbelievers. Nor have any of these schemes hitherto very much assisted the unlearned christian in the practice of his devotions, or blessed him with much clearer and juster ideas of the matter than his own reading of the bible had given him before.

And it must be confessed also with sorrow and shame, that some writers have invented or enlarged special explications of the sacred doctrine with too great a neglect of scripture in their studies. They have affected to be wise in words without ideas. They have set forth their own learned explications of the doctrine of the trinity, in founding scholastic phrases and hard words, with great assurance; and have helped men to talk roundly on this sublime subject with a great exuberance and fluency of such language as has been established into orthodoxy. This sacred doctrine has been too often dressed up by authors in abundance of metaphysical phrases borrowed from the popish schools, but without any clearer conceptions of the truth than their primitive predecessors had attained, or than their meaner brethren possess without that learned language.

But though nothing has hitherto been done so effectually as one could wish, to remove all difficulty and confusion, yet he is a bold man that will venture to lay an everlasting bar upon our fervent prayers and humble study of the scripture, and upon all the labours and hopes of the present and future christian ages, merely because the ages past have not been favoured with those happy hints whereby to unfold these sacred mysteries, and to reconcile the difficulties that attend them.

## S E C T I O N III.

**B**UT after all, whatsoever light or knowledge we may suppose ourselves to have attained in the explication of this sublime doctrine, we ought not to be over-solicitous to proselyte other christians to our particular scheme; much less to impose it on the consciences of others: We should ever take care lest by anxious enquiries into things less necessary, we should unhappily divert ourselves or others from those duties and practical regards, which we all owe to the Father, Son and Spirit, and which all parties agree to be necessary to salvation."

It is an important lesson both of natural and revealed religion, that we should lay out our greatest concern and zeal on things of the greatest consequence: and we have already proved, that it is of much higher moment to wait for divine benefits from the sacred three, and to pay our proper respective honours to the sacred three, so far as scripture requires it, than to know how far they are the same, and how far they are distinguished. Indeed when we have arrived at any farther light in some divine doctrine, we ourselves may find greater clearness of thought, with more ease, satisfaction and pleasure in the practice of especial duties; yet the most enlightened persons ought not to give unnecessary and unreasonable disturbance to all those who practise the same duties, though they do not attain so clear ideas as God may have blessed and favoured them with.

If we labour in our zeal to proselyte the learned to our scheme, the most part of them are so deeply rooted in their old opinions, so unmoveably established in their particular forms, so self-satisfied in what they believe, so much prejudiced against any further light, that we shall probably do nothing but awaken their learned anger, to fix the brand of heresy upon us, and to overwhelm the hints of any brighter discovery with clamours and hard names, and drown them in noise and darkness.

If we are too solicitous to persuade the unlearned christian to come into any better explication of this doctrine than he has learned in his younger years, we have the same huge prejudices to encounter here as in the learned world; nor can we hope for much better success, if we attempt to change his ancient opinion by a hasty and industrious zeal. Hard names and reproaches are weapons ever at hand, and common both to the wise and the unwise, the *greek* and the barbarian. The vulgar christian is as expert at them as the scholar.

Besides, if he be a person of weaker understanding whom we address with our new explication, and we set ourselves hard at work to shake his old notions, but in the mere modus of things, we may happen to unhinge him, as it were, and throw him off from his center; we may imbarass his mind with inward contests, which may be too hard for him; and we may tempt him to lay out too many of his thoughts and hours on some particular explications of this doctrine, on the substance of which he had long before built his pious practices and devotions, though mingled with some innocent mistakes.

Yet these accidental inconveniences are not a sufficient reason for our supine and perpetual contentment with confused sentiments and unintelligible speeches about the modus of sacred truths, if clearer ideas are any ways attainable. There are just and strong motives that may excite us to search into the deep things of God, and to propose all our improvements in knowledge, to the world and the church, though



there are no reasons or motives sufficient to impel us to impose our improved notions on others, or to raise contentions and quarrels on the account of them.

All our particular illustrations therefore, or clearer conceptions of this sublime doctrine which God at any time may have favoured us with, should be proposed to the christian world with great modesty, with a humble sense of our fallible natures, with a gentle address to the wise and to the unwise, without imposing upon their judgments or dictating to their faith, and with a zealous care to maintain all those necessary practical regards to the holy trinity, which are of so much greater importance.

And if it be an unreasonable thing to dictate to our fellow-christians, and urge our particular sentiments on them in these mysterious points, how much more culpable and domineering is it to establish any especial form of human explication of this sacred doctrine as a test of orthodoxy and christianity! How vain a presumption it is with a pretence of divine authority to impose mere human explanations upon the consciences of men, and to forbid them all the sacred blessings of especial communion in the gospel, unless they testify their assent to such a particular hypothesis or scheme of explication, which the imposers confess to be human, and yet impose it in their own prescribed form of words.

The persons who are guilty of this uncharitable practice may consecrate their impositions, and their excommunications with holy names, and call them pure zeal for the divinity of *Christ*; but I suspect it will be found in the great day to deserve no better a character than a mistaken zeal for the honour of *Christ*, mingled perhaps with zeal for the divinity of their own notions, which they had incorporated with the plain and express revelations of the godhead of *Jesus Christ* our Lord.

He that makes a private and particular explication of any doctrine which is dark and doubtful in itself, and not clearly revealed in scripture, as necessary as the doctrine itself, which is plain and clearly revealed, puts the matters of faith and opinion on the same foot, and intrudes too much upon the authority and kingdom of our Lord *Jesus* in his church.

T H E  
GLORY of CHRIST  
A S  
G O D - M A N  
DISPLAYED,  
In Three DISCOURSES.

V I Z.

Disc. I. A survey of the visible appearances of CHRIST, as God before his incarnation, with some observations on the texts of the old testament applied to CHRIST.

Disc. II. An enquiry into the extensive powers of the human Nature of CHRIST in it's present glorified state, with several testimonies annexed.

Disc. III. An argument tracing out the early existence of the human soul of CHRIST, even before the creation of the world.

With an A P P E N D I X,

Containing an abridgment of doctor THOMAS GOODWIN's discourse of the "Glories and Royalties of CHRIST," in his works in folio, Vol. II. Book iii.



THE  
GLORY OF CHRIST

G O O D - M A N

DISPLAYED

IN THREE DISCOURSES

VIZ.

Disc. I. A survey of the visible appearances of Christ, and of his incarnation, with some observations on the testimony of the old testament applied to Christ.

Disc. II. An enquiry into the extensive powers of the human nature of Christ in its present glorified state, with several testimonies annexed.

Disc. III. An argument tracing out the early existence of the human soul of Christ, even before the creation of the world.

With an APPENDIX

Containing an abridgement of doctor Thomas Goodwin's discourse of the "Glorious and Royalties of Christ", in his works in folio, Vol. II. Book III.

T H E  
P R E F A C E.

**O**UR Lord *Jesus Christ* is the author, the foundation and the glory of our religion. The scripture teaches us to describe this blessed person two ways, that is, as a man who is one with God, or as God who is one with man.

He is called sometimes "God with us," *Matth. i. 23.* "God manifest in the flesh," *1 Tim. iii. 16.* that is, God dwelling in our mortal nature. At other times he is described as the man *Christ Jesus*, "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily," *1 Tim. ii. 5.* and *Col. ii. 9.* A man "of the seed of *David* after the flesh, who is God over all, blessed for evermore," *Rom. ix. 5.* A man whose flesh *Thomas* the apostle saw and felt, and yet called him "My Lord and my God," *John xx. 27, 28.* Upon such scriptures as these my faith is built.

And as it is the most general sentiment of the christian world in our age, so I must acknowledge it is very evident to me, that our blessed Saviour is often represented in scripture as a complex person, wherein God and man are united, so as to make up one complex agent, one intellectual compound being, God joined with man, so as to become one common principle of action and passion. *Christ* wrought miraculous works, and yet it is "the Father or God in him who doth these works," *John xiv. 10.* The God and the man are one.

And on this account the child *Jesus* may be well called the mighty God, *Isai. ix. 6.* And God himself is said to redeem the church with his own blood, *Acts xx. 28.* And to lay down his life for us, *1 John iii. 16.* This intimate or present union between God and *Christ* allows him to say, *John x. 38.* "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." And verse 30. "I and the Father are one."

Since *Christ Jesus* in his person and his offices hath so large a share in our holy religion, we cannot be too well acquainted with his various glories. It is the study and joy of angels to pry into these wonders, *1 Pet. i. 12.* And it is the duty of men to grow in the knowledge of *Christ* their Lord, their God, and their Saviour, *2 Pet. iii. 18.*

It is granted, that many things relating to the ever blessed trinity may have heights and depths in them which are unsearchable by our understandings. Though we learn from scripture, that true and proper deity is ascribed to the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit, and that they are represented often in scripture as distinct personal agents; yet after all our enquiries and prayers we may be still much at a loss to describe exactly wherein this distinct personality consists, and what is the distinct communion of each of them in the divine nature. We have never yet been able with any strong evidence and clear certainty precisely to adjust this sacred difficulty, how far they are one, and how far they are three. Several schemes and hypotheses have



have been invented for this purpose, and the best of them falls short of solving all questions relating to this doctrine completely to our satisfaction, though some of them are evidently much more agreeable to scripture than others.

As it is our great happiness, that the knowledge of any such particular schemes of explication are not necessary to the salvation of men, so neither are any of those different schemes of the trinity at all needful to our present enquiries concerning that glory of *Christ*, which is the subject of this treatise.

Let no humble christian therefore be jealous of losing his own form of explaining the trinity by reading these discourses, nor let him be afraid of being led into any particular human schemes or explications of that divine doctrine. I have so far laid them all aside in this book, that there is scarce any hint of any of them, and that in a very slight and transient manner.

The glories of *Christ*, both in his divine and human nature, which are here unfolded, are not necessarily confined to any particular schemes or hypotheses of the trinity. All that I pretend to maintain here is, that our blessed Saviour must be God, and he must be man; God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, that is, one complex personal agent. Those who believe this doctrine may read these treatises without danger or fear; for I would always endeavour to search out divine truth, and promote the knowledge of *Christ*, as far as possible, without offence to the bulk of the christian world, or any of the truly pious and religious of every party.

These three discourses were written at three distant and different times: I hope therefore my readers will be so candid as to bear with a small repetition of the same thoughts, or with references from one discourse to another, though not expressed in so regular a manner as though I had all three constantly in one view.

Though the order in which these discourses stand be not adjusted according to chronology, yet it is such an order as I thought most proper to lead my reader by degrees into these discoveries of the glory of *Christ*.

In the first of these discourses I have maintained the "godhead of *Christ* in his appearances under the old testament." The doctrine itself is entirely agreeable to the common sentiments of all our divines, and I have confirmed it by such arguments as seem to me most effectual and convincing. I persuade myself the generality of my readers will concur with me in these sentiments, though I will not say I have borrowed my method of argument and vindication from any but the sacred writers.

In the second and third discourses perhaps they will find some things, which though they are derived from scripture, yet appear to be more uncommon, and which have not been taken notice of by many authors. With regard to these, I beg leave to make these few requests to those who will seriously, and with a honest heart peruse what I have here written.

1. That they would suffer themselves to believe with me that we have not yet attained all knowledge, nor particularly apprehended all those things that may be learned from the bible concerning our Lord *Jesus Christ*: and that they would permit themselves also to think with me, that we are all fallible creatures, and that it is possible for us to have been mistaken in some points, at least of lesser moment, which we have been taught to believe before we were capable of searching the word of God for ourselves: for the best of men who have been our teachers know but in part, and therefore they could prophesy or instruct others but in part, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. Though they have

have spoken the truth, yet perhaps they have not spoken all the truth which lies hid in the holy scriptures.

2. That my readers would not be startled and discomposed at any thing which may seem new and strange to them at first appearance, nor be frightened at a sentence, as though heresy were in it, because it may differ a little from the sentiments which they have hitherto received. That very same notion in any science whatsoever, which may perhaps surprize us at first, by reading further onward may become plain and easy and certain: and I can assure them, that there is not one sentence in all these discourses but what is very consistent with a firm belief of the divinity of *Christ*, and a just and sincere concern for the most eminent and glorious truths of the gospel, as they are profess'd by protestants among us against the *Jocinian* and *arian* errors.

3. That they would not rashly conclude that any christian doctrine is lost, or any article of their faith endangered, or the proper deity of our Lord *Jesus Christ* dropped or neglected, if they should be led to interpret a few texts of scripture in another manner than they themselves have been formerly used to explain them: for it must be acknowledged, that some pious and zealous writers for the truth have mustered together out of all the bible whatsoever texts could possibly be turned by art or force to support any one doctrine which they undertook to defend, just as ancient heretics have done to support their errors. Now among this great number of scriptures, it may be easily supposed, that there is here and there one which is not so fit and apposite to their purpose, and which does not carry in it naturally that sense which has been imposed upon it; or at least which does not contain that force of argument which has been generally believed; and yet the same point of doctrine may remain unmoveable, without the help of that particular text.

Now though they have been learned and wise and pious men that have used these scriptures to support some particular doctrine of scripture or article of faith, yet it is possible they may have been mistaken in the application of them. Later days, and the maturer age of the world, have given light to many passages of the bible which were not well understood in the days of the fathers: and though I read their writings with sincere reverence, yet not with an absolute submission to their dictates. The same doctrines and articles of faith which they espoused and defended in their time, may be still espoused and defended with as much zeal and success in our day by some new arguments brought to support them, though in reason and justice we are constrained to drop some of the old ones. Besides,

There is more honour done to the cause of christianity and the gospel, by building all the articles of it upon such scriptures only as are firm and unshaken to support them, than by multiplying feeble shews and shadows of defence. We expose ourselves and our faith at once to the insult and ridicule of our adversaries, by persisting in a mistaken exposition of scripture, and by maintaining every colour or false appearance of argument, even though it be in the defense of a most important truth. We ought to make use of all the advantages of encreasing light, nor continue in a wrong application of scriptures to support any point of our faith in opposition to their most open and evident meaning. Though truth is infinitely preferable to error, yet men may use insufficient arguments for one as well as the other. And in our days, I conceive a wise and thoughtful man will not be charmed at once with a title-page, merely because it pretends to many hundred proofs of the godhead of *Christ*.

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4. I request that they would consult their bible with diligence, as I have done, especially in the places which I have cited, and like honest english readers would look only at the sense as it lies before them, and neither consider nor care whether it be new or old, so it be true: For he that doth this, is much more likely to be led into the truth than a greater scholar, full of his own notions which he has learned in the schools, who brings his own opinions always to direct and determine his own interpretation of scripture whensoever he reads it; and thus he interprets every text, not so much according to the plain, obvious, and easy sense of it, and in correspondence with the context, as he does in correspondence with his own opinions and his learned schemes.

5. That they would suffer themselves to yield to truth wheresoever they find it, and imagine that the loss of an old opinion by the force and evidence of truth is a victory gained over error, and a honourable advancement in their own knowledge in the things of God.

6. That they would apply themselves with sincere diligence to consider the evidence of scripture for any of the opinions that I have proposed or maintained, rather than labour to invent objections as fast as ever they can against it, as though they knew it was false before-hand; for if we read a treatise which contains ever so much truth, with a previous aversion to the doctrines of it, and a resolution before-hand to object against it all the way, we hinder ourselves from attending to the force of reason, and prevent our minds from taking in the evidence on which any doctrine is founded.

I grant it is necessary that all just objections should have their due weight, and they ought to be well considered in our enquiries after truth; yet when any doctrine has many and strong arguments from scripture and reason advanced to support it, one difficulty or two which at present seem hard to be solved, should not utterly forbid our assent, since, as bishop *Fowler* well observes, "There are scarce any notions so plain as to be incapable of being obscured and called in question, except the first and self-evident principles, or the immediate consequences of them." Because we understand not what is difficult, we must not merely for that reason deny that which is clear and plain; and if we will refuse to believe any proposition until we are perfectly able to master all objections against it, we may be sceptics all our days, both in matters of philosophy and religion, and even in some doctrines of the highest importance, and with all our pretences to learning, may finish our lives like mere fools.

7. That they would acknowledge that the glories of our blessed Lord are so many, so various, and so sublime, that there is but very little of them yet known, in comparison of the unknown glories which he possesses; and that a sincere love to *Christ* and a zeal for his honour, should lead them out with pleasure and expectation to meet any further discoveries of this kind, which may be drawn from the word of God. That they would withhold themselves from a hasty refusal to receive all such manifestations, lest they should prevent the growing honours of their Saviour.

8. While I am tracing these early and sublime glories of our blessed redeemer, by the gleams or the rays of light which are scattered in several parts of his word, I intreat my friends, that they would not be too severe in their censures of any mistaken step, while I own myself fallible, and am ready to retract any mistake.

If they should meet with any expressions which in their opinion do not stand so perfectly just and square with other of my sentiments in some distant parts of these essays, I would persuade myself they will be so candid as to interpret them in a consistence with the general scope and design of my argument, and with my avowed sense of things in the more important points of religion.

It is an easy matter to be led a little astray in pursuing such an uncommon track through the third heavens, the present exalted residence of our glorified Saviour; and in tracing the foot-steps of our blessed Lord through long past ages of his pre-existent state, be they never so certain, which commenced before these lower heavens were formed, or time was measured by the sun and moon. Succeeding writers may more happily conduct themselves in so glorious an inquiry, and correct my wanderings: But I am persuaded my gracious Redeemer will forgive what errors he remarks in these sincere attempts to advance his honour; and I hope my pious readers will find some degrees of entertainment, as well as improvement, and feel some devout thoughts awakened in them sufficient to influence their charity and candour.

9. That they would not imagine that all these notions and opinions which may be something new and strange to them, are pure inventions of my own, and mere fallies of imagination.

I must acknowledge indeed that I have endeavoured to carry on the hints I have met with in some great and honoured writers to a further length, and to trace the golden thread of these discoveries through far distant scenes and ages, by the light both of reason and scripture: But as I have no ambition to assume these discoveries to myself, so I ought in justice to stand secure from these censures which a heated and warm zeal for ancient land-marks, is ready to throw upon every thing that bears the appearance of novelty.

I have therefore in the end of some of these discourses or inquiries, cited several writers of name and eminence, and called in the assistance of their authority to cover these essays from the sudden and severe reproaches of those who reverence the names of those great, and learned, and pious men. And what such venerable authors thought very consistent with orthodox doctrine, and so useful and necessary to support the honours of our blessed Lord, I humbly hope and request that my readers will not hastily abandon and reject as heresy, and renounce it at once without due consideration of the arguments.

And as for those who have a great regard for the writings of so ingenious and so pious a man, so evangelical an author, and so great a divine as doctor *Thomas Goodwin*, I might recommend to them the perusal of his treatise of the "royalty of *Jesus Christ*, as God-man," which I have abridged here; and before they read these essays I might intreat them to read this abridgement, though I dare not pretend to give my assent to all his opinions in these papers, or support them.

Give me leave to finish this preface, so far as it relates to the discourses on the pre-existent soul of *Christ*, and the extensive powers of his glorified human nature, in the modest and amiable language of that ingenious gentleman who wrote many years ago of the progressive knowledge of souls in the future state. "If any thing should drop from my pen in the progress of this discourse which may seem too affirmative, and hardly reconcileable with a becoming modesty and jealousy, I desire those luxuriations of expressions may receive some abatements, and be made fairly agreeable thereunto. For although I may possibly be indifferently well persuaded of the truth of what I shall



discourse, yet I am not certain : It is not improbable that I should be mistaken : I am of human race, and have no privilege of exemption from human infirmities and errors."

"Whether the proofs that I shall make of this proposed theme be valid or invalid, the reader must determine when he hath weighed and considered them. I am content that they be esteemed just as they are. If my arguments be thought invalid, and my opinion rejected, it will be no matter of provocation to me. If they be thought cogent, and my opinion worthy of acceptance with pious and ingenious men, perchance I may be a little pleased therein. But if it may advance the honour and the love of God, my Saviour, and make heaven the more acceptable to the thoughts and Meditations of christians, because we have so glorious a mediator dwelling there, I am sure I shall greatly rejoyce."

DIS.

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# DISCOURSE I.

The GLORY of CHRIST as GOD-MAN  
displayed,

By a SURVEY of the visible appearances of CHRIST as  
GOD, before his incarnation.

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## S E C T I O N I.

*An historical account of these appearances.*

SINCE the *socinian* doctrines have been effectually refuted by many learned writers, especially in the last century, it is now, I hope, confessed almost universally in the *british* islands, that our blessed Saviour had a real existence long before he appeared in flesh and blood, and dwelt among men. It is also generally acknowledged that he often appeared in a visible manner under the patriarchal and mosaical dispensations, assuming the names, and sustaining the character and person of the great and blessed God. Yet it has been a matter of contest in these latter years, as well as in the ancient days of *Arius*, whether *Christ* in his complex person, include godhead or not: or whether he be nothing else but a creature or a mere contingent being, and is only called God, as sustaining and representing the character and person of one who is infinitely above him, even the great and eternal God. This is the great and important question of the age.

Now that this matter may be determined with more evidence and certainty, let us first trace out the account which the old testament gives us of the various seasons and occasions on which God, the Lord\*, the Lord God, *Jehovah*, the Almighty, the God

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\* Let the unlearned reader take notice, that there are two *hebrew* words, viz. *Jehovah* and *Adon* or *Adonai*, both which our translators render Lord. The first, viz. *Jehovah*, signifies the eternal or unchangeable,



God of *Abraham*, &c. is said to appear amongst men, with a few remarks on them in passing; and afterward we shall be enabled to draw more particular inferences from these scriptures concerning the deity of *Christ* and his appearances before his incarnation.

Whosoever will read the four first chapters of *Genesis* with due attention, will find a very plain and easy representation of the great God, first creating all things, and afterwards appearing to *Adam*, *Eve*, and *Cain*, and conversing with them with a human voice, and very probably in a human shape too. I am well assured that any common reader who begins the bible without prejudices or prepossessions of any kind, would naturally frame this idea under the words and expressions of *Moses*, the sacred writer.

In the first place, God represents his own design of creating man in this manner, viz.

*Gen. i. 26.* "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, &c. Verse 27. So God created man after his own image: in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them: And God blessed them and said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, &c. Verse 29. And God said, behold I have given you every herb bearing seed, to you it shall be for meat, and to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, &c."

Now it is very probable, that when God had made man, he appeared to him in man's own shape, and thus made it known to *Adam*, that he had formed him in his own image, even as to his body; that is, in such a form or figure as God himself did, and would frequently assume, in order to converse with man: And perhaps God also might acquaint *Adam* with the natural and moral perfections of his own soul, viz. knowledge, righteousness and holiness, wherein he resembled his maker, and bare his likeness, as well as that God himself sometimes assumed the figure of a man.

Let it be noted here also, that when God blessed some part of the animal creation, it is expressed only, "God said, but not to them as hearers, be fruitful and multiply," as verse 22. that is, God put forth a divine volition or command concerning the multiplication of inferior creatures; but he spake to *Adam* and *Eve* directly as his hearers, and most likely with a human voice, for he said unto them, "Be fruitful and multiply;" and told them that he had given them the fruits of the earth for their food, and that he had given it also to the fowls and the beasts: Whereas God is not said to speak thus concerning food to the beasts or to the fowls themselves, but only told *Adam* what he had appointed for their common food. This looks like a human appearance conversing with him, and will appear more evidently in what follows.

*Gen.*

changeable, and has been sufficiently proved to be the proper name of the great God, the God of *Israel*, peculiar to him and incommunicable to creatures; and it is written always in capital letters LORD, for distinction sake, "Thou whose name alone is *JEHOVAH* art the most high over all the earth," *Psal. lxxxiii. 18.* though it had been much better if the *hebrew* name, *Jehovah* itself had been always written in our *english* bibles, that the hearer might distinguish it as well as the reader. The other name, viz. *Adonai* or *Adonai* is also translated Lord, and written in small letters, because it is not the proper name of the great God; it signifies his lordship or dominion, and is not so peculiar nor incommunicable.

Now let it be observed, that in almost every place which I have cited to shew the various appearances of the LORD to men, it is the name *Jehovah* is used, which the reader will find distinguished by capital letters in the *english* bible.

*Gen. ii. 16.* "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree in the garden thou mayst freely eat; but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it." *Verse 19.* And the Lord God brought every beast of the field and every fowl of the air to *Adam* to see what he would call them. *Verse 22.* And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman, and brought her unto the man." All this seems to be the transactions and language of the Lord God appearing in human shape, and with human voice to *Adam*.

*Gen. iii. 8.* "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and *Adam* and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. 9. And the Lord God called unto *Adam*, and said unto him, where art thou? 10. And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself. 11. And he said, who told thee that thou wast naked? &c. *Verse 13.* And the Lord God said unto the woman, what is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me and I did eat. *Verse 21.* Unto *Adam* and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them, &c."

I think there is a very plain description of a visible appearance and a human voice in this scene and these dialogues. *Adam* and his wife could never be said to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord, if he had not before manifested a visible presence to them; nor could they know his voice, if he had not conversed with them by a human voice before: This is a pretty plain proof that God conversed with them in a human manner in the foregoing instances. Nor yet could they have hid themselves from a mere voice among trees, nor could they have been ashamed of their nakedness before a mere voice, if they had not known God before by a visible presence and appearance, whose face they now avoided among the trees.

It is probable that God not only conversed with *Adam* and *Eve*, but with their children and family in the same manner in the beginning of the world; for you read a plain dialogue between God and *Cain*, *Gen. iv. 6.* "And the Lord said unto *Cain*, why art thou wroth? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And the Lord said unto *Cain*, where is *Abel* thy brother? And *Cain* said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper? And God replied again, what hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood cryeth unto me from the ground, &c. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth: And *Cain* said unto the Lord, my punishment is greater than I can bear: Behold thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face I shall be hid. *Verse 16.* And *Cain* went out from the presence of the Lord." Surely every reader among the *jews*, for whom *Moses* wrote this, would have an idea of the great God's appearing and conversing with *Adam* and his household in a human shape, and after the manner of men: and then *Cain* went out from the presence of God.

But whatsoever shape appeared to them, I think it must be granted, that God appeared in a visible manner, where the expressions are so plain and so strong, where the repetitions are so many, that the Lord, that is, *Jehovah*, the Lord God appeared, and sat or walked, and did and spake this or that. In so many transactions and dialogues it is very hard to suppose that there was nothing else but a created angel came assuming the name of God. Surely such sort of representations would lead all common readers into a gross mistake, if God himself were not here at all in a special and visible manner.



It is very probable there might be some glorious light, some awful brightness, that frequently surrounded and invested this human form in which God appeared and conversed with man, and which might be called his divine form, that he might be thereby in some measure distinguished and well known as God. Doubtless the Lord, *Jehovah*, when he came down to visit men, carried some ensign of divine majesty with him, some splendid cloud or luminous rays about him when he designed that men should know God was there. It was such a light appeared often at the door of the tabernacle, and fixed it's abode on the ark between the cherubims, and by the *jews* was called the *shekinah*, that is, the habitation of God. And thence God is described in scripture as "dwelling in light, and clothed with light as with a garment," *Psal.* civ. 4. but in the midst of this brightness there seems to have been sometimes a human shape and figure. And probably this heavenly brightness was that divine clothing, that form of God of which *Christ* divested himself when he came to tabernacle, or dwell in flesh, with a design of humiliation, though he might converse with men heretofore arrayed in this lightsome robe, this covering or habitation of God, which also he put on at his transfiguration in the mount, when his garments were white as the light; and at his ascension to heaven, when a bright cloud received or invested him, and when he appeared to *John*, *Rev.* i. 13.

And as God visibly conversed with *Adam* and his family, so also with several of the patriarchs. He was seen often by them, especially such of them as were most eminent for holiness in a degenerate age, and conversed familiarly with them in a visible manner: And thence probably came the phrase, "*Enoch* walked with God," *Gen.* v. 22, 24. and "*Noah* walked with God," *Gen.* vi. 9. which in process of time became a common phrase to signify a pious man, who conversed much with God in a spiritual manner, though those visible appearances were not then vouchsafed to him.

When God had chosen *Abraham* to be his peculiar favourite, he appeared to him frequently, *Acts* vii. 2. "The God of glory appeared to our father *Abraham* when he was in *Mesopotamia*, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, &c." And when he came into the land of *Canaan*, *Gen.* xii. 11. "The Lord appeared unto *Abraham*, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land; and there he built an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him; or, as the *hebrew* expresses it, who was seen by him." These seem to be visible appearances surrounded with light or glory, and therefore it is said, "the God of glory appeared to him."

*Gen.* xv. 1. "After these things the word of the Lord came unto *Abraham* in a vision, saying, Fear not, *Abraham*, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward: And *Abraham* said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me? &c." Here was a vision, and here was a voice; the person that appeared was the Lord God or *Jehovah Elobim*: and yet it is said, "The word of the Lord came to him in a vision:" probably this signifies *Jesus Christ*, the Logos or Word of God. And yet, verse 7. he assumes the name of *Jehovah*, "I am the Lord that brought thee out of *Ur* of the *Chaldees*:" and verse 17. a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between the pieces of the divided sacrifice in token of God's making a covenant with *Abraham*; as it follows, verse 18. "In that same day, the Lord, or *Jehovah*, made a covenant with *Abraham* \*."

*Gen.*

\* Here let it be observed, that the ancient *jews*, such as the tarmugists or commentators on scripture, and *Philo* represent the Memra, the Logos, that is the Word of the Lord, as appearing to the patriarchs in

Gen. xvi. 7. "The angel of the Lord found *Hagar* in the wilderness, and said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly;" and though he be called the angel of the Lord, in four places of this narrative, yet verse 13. "She called the name of the Lord, or *Jehovah*, that spake to her, Thou God seest me." The person who appeared therefore seems to be one who was an angel of the Lord, and was also the Lord or *Jehovah*.

Gen. xvii. 1. "When *Abraham* was ninety years old and nine, the Lord or *Jehovah* appeared to him, and said unto him, I am the almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. Verse 3. And *Abraham* fell on his face: And God talked with him, saying, Behold my covenant is with thee, &c. to be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee, &c. and I will be their God." Here is another dialogue; and "God said unto *Abraham*, — and *Abraham* said unto God," verses 9, 15, 18. and in verse 22. "he left off talking with him, and God went up from *Abraham*," that is, the visible appearance ascended out of *Abraham's* sight.

Gen. xviii. 1. "And the Lord, *Jehovah*, appeared unto him in the plains of *Mamre*, and he sat in the tent-door in the heat of the day, and he lift up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood before him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent-door, and bowed himself toward the ground; and said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant." His first address was made to one of the three, who seemed to bear superior glory; afterward he invites them all to eat, and "he took butter and milk, verse 8. and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. And he said; *Sarah* thy wife shall have a Son: at which tidings when *Sarah* laughed within herself, the Lord, or *Jehovah*, said to unto *Abraham*, Wherefore did *Sarah* laugh? Verse 13. Is any thing too hard for the Lord, or *Jehovah*?" Now I think it is evident that one of these three men was expressly called *Jehovah*: two of them went onward toward *Sodom*, but he that is called *Jehovah* seemed to stay behind; verses 16, 17, and 22. "The men, that is, the two men, turned their faces from thence, and went towards *Sodom*, but *Abraham* stood yet before *Jehovah*." And a long dialogue there ensues between *Abraham* and the Lord or *Jehovah*, about the sparing of *Sodom*, wherein *Abraham* addresses him as the true God, in verse 33. "The Lord, *Jehovah*, went his way as soon as he had left communing with *Abraham*, and *Abraham* returned to his place." And Gen. xix. 1. "There came two angels to *Sodom* at even," which most probably were the two men that left *Abraham* while *Jehovah* tarried and talked with him. Now it is evident in the conversation that neither of these two angels assumed the name of *Jehovah*;

in almost all these places where God is said to appear: and of this divine Word they give us two different ideas, as I have shewn elsewhere: The one is, that it signifies something in and of the true and eternal godhead, some distinct principle in the divine nature itself, which is called the Word or Wisdom of God, whereby God revealed himself to men. The other is the idea of some most excellent angel in whom God resided, and by whom God manifested himself, and who was upon that account called the Word of God. Their writings lead us plainly to both these ideas: Nor is it at all unreasonable to suppose, that both these ideas may be united in one, and thus compose a sort of complex person, an angel inhabited by true godhead under the idea of divine Wisdom. Some have called this person a god-angel in all these visible appearances; and why may not our blessed Saviour be this god-angel by reason of his human soul pre-existent and united to godhead in its unincarnate or angelic state, that is, before he became complete God-man, and afterward he was "made a little lower than the angels" by dwelling in flesh and blood? See more of this matter in other writings. But this I do but just mention as I pass along, and in the margin only, because I would not enter into any modus of explaining the internal distinctions in the godhead in these discourses: especially since these discourses agree well enough with any known scheme of internal distinctions in the godhead.



*Jehovah*; for verse 13. they say, "The cry of the men of *Sodom* is waxen great before the face of the Lord, that is, *Jehovah*, and *Jehovah* hath sent us to destroy it." This narrative gives us a plain account of the great God appearing to *Abraham*, and conversing with him in the form of a man; for it is said, he "appeared to *Abraham*, or was seen of him, talked with him, and went up from him."

*Gen. xxi. 17.* "God heard the voice of the lad, *Ismael*, and the angel of God called unto *Hagar* out of heaven, Arise, lift up the lad, for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water." Here is a person speaking, who seems to assume something of godhead, who yet is called the angel of God: But whether there was any visible appearance, the scripture saith not.

*Gen. xxii. 11.* "The angel of the Lord called to *Abraham* out of heaven, and said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, that is, *Isaac*, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thy only son from me. Verse 14. And *Abraham* called the name of that place *Jehovah Jireh*. Verse 15. And the angel of the Lord called unto *Abraham* out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in blessing I will bless thee, because thou hast obeyed my voice." Here also is an angel of *Jehovah*, who seems to assume the character of deity: but whether there was a visible appearance or only a voice is not certain.

*Gen. xxvi. 2.* "And the Lord, *Jehovah*, appeared unto *Isaac*, and said, Go not down into the land of *Egypt*; sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and I will bless thee, I will perform the oath which I swore unto *Abraham* thy father. Verse 24. And when *Isaac* went to *Beersheba*, the Lord appeared to him the same night, and said, I am the God of *Abraham* thy father: Fear not, for I am with thee." Besides these two, I remember not any other appearance of God to *Isaac*.

The two first appearances which we read, that God made unto *Jacob* were both in a dream; one in *Gen. xxviii. 12.* "The angels of God ascending and descending on a ladder, set up on the earth and reaching to heaven; and behold the Lord, or *Jehovah*, stood above it, and said, I am *Jehovah*, the God of *Abraham* thy father, and the God of *Isaac*. *Gen. xxviii. 12, 13.* and verse 16. *Jacob* said, surely the Lord is in this place. *Gen. xxxi. 11, 13.* And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, *Jacob*; and I said, here am I: And he said, I am the God of *Bethel*, where thou vowedst a vow unto me." Here is an angel in a divine or inspired dream calling himself the God of *Bethel*. And verse 24. "God came to *Laban* the Syrian by night in a dream, and said to him, Take heed that thou speak not to *Jacob* neither good or bad." Doubtless these ancients had sufficient rules of distinction to know when such a dream was divine.

*Gen. xxxii. 24.* "And *Jacob* was left alone, when his wives and children were gone over the ford, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day: And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh: And *Jacob* replied, I will not let thee go except thou bless me: And he said, Thy name shall be called no more *Jacob* but *Israel*, for as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed; and *Jacob* called the name of that place, *PENIEL*, for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved\*." Now if we compare this history with

*Hosea*

\* We find here it was a very ancient opinion that "no man could bear the sight of God and live:" What is the true meaning of it, see in the following reflexions on the appearance of the glory of God to *Moses* at the giving of the law, *Exod. xix.* and *xx.* and in the hole of the rock, *Exod. xxxiii. 9.*

*Hosea* xii. 3, 4, 5. we shall find that this person who wrestled with *Jacob*, and is here called a man, and also God, is by the prophet called God, and an angel, and the Lord God of hosts, even *Jehovah*. The words are these, "By his strength he had power with God, yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto him, he found him in *Bethel*, and there he spake with us; even the Lord God of hosts, *Jehovah* is his memorial."

*Gen.* xxxv. 9. "And God appeared unto *Jacob* again when he came out of *Padan-aram*, and blessed him. And God said, I am God almighty, be fruitful and multiply, &c. And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him. And *Jacob* called the name of the place where God spake with him, *Bethel*."

*Gen.* xlvii. 2. "God spake unto *Israel* in the visions of the night, and said, I am God, the God of thy father, fear not to go down into *Egypt*." In *Gen.* xlviii. 3. *Jacob* rehearsed the former appearance of God to him; "God almighty appeared to me at *Luz* in the land of *Canaan*, and blessed me." And verse 15. he blesses *Joseph* thus, "God, before whom my fathers, *Abraham* and *Isaac*, did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads," that is, the sons of *Joseph*. And in this recognition of the former appearances, and favours of God, *Jacob* seems to make the God of his fathers, *Abraham* and *Isaac*, to be the same person with the angel that redeemed him from all evil.

After this I find no more such appearances of God unto men, till that glorious apparition to *Moses* in the burning bush.

*Exod.* ii. 2, 3. "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. Verse 3. And *Moses* said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. Verse 4. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the middle of the bush, and said, *Moses, Moses*. And he said, here am I. Verse 5. And he said, Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Verse 6. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob*. And *Moses* hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. Verse 7. And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in *Egypt*, &c. Verse 13. And *Moses* said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of *Israel*, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you: and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them? Verse 14. And God said unto *Moses*, I AM THAT I AM: And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of *Israel*, I AM hath sent me unto you. Verse 15. And God said moreover unto *Moses*, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of *Israel*, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob*, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." Chapter iv. 1. "And *Moses* answered and said, But behold, they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." And in order to prove that the Lord or *Jehovah* had appeared unto him, "The Lord said unto him, Cast thy rod on the ground, &c. Verse 5. That they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob*, hath appeared unto thee." And thus the sacred dialogue between God and *Moses* proceeds. This same history is briefly repeated by *Stephen*, *Acts* vii. 30—36.



Whoever reads this narrative, will plainly find, that this person who appeared to *Moses*, was both the angel of the Lord, and was God himself: For it is said, *Moses* was afraid to look upon God. He is called an angel by the sacred writer at his first appearance, but he is also called in the succeeding parts of the narrative God the Lord, *Jehovah*, the God of *Abraham*, &c. The sacred historian calls him so frequently, and he himself roundly and strongly calls himself so. He assumes the highest names and titles of the supreme God, "I am that I am, &c." and that in the most solemn and majestic manner that it is possible God himself could do, if he designed never so plainly to declare his own personal presence.

Now I would humbly propose these questions to every reader, Whether if he should put himself as it were in the place of *Moses*, he would not have been fully convinced, and believed that the great and eternal God was the person actually immediately present in the burning bush in an extraordinary manner? Whether he could avoid believing that the person who spake to him was really the true and eternal God? And though he might suppose that it was an angel that appeared there, whether such strong, express and solemn assumptions of the divine nature, would not lead him to believe that God and this angel, at least in that season, and for that purpose, were so far united as to become as it were one agent, one speaker, one complex person? And whether *Moses* himself could have any other idea of this appearance, but as God, the great and blessed God, dwelling or residing in, and acting and speaking by this angel? Whether the mere idea of a creature, an angel sent as a vicerent or deputy to speak in the name of God, could answer these sublime assertions of the sacred writer, and these divine characters so strongly assumed by the angel? And whether any unprejudiced reader could understand this to be the mere messenger of an absent God, since there is no notice through all this narrative that he was merely an angel sent from God, considered as absent, to carry a message to *Moses*, but rather many notices given both by the person appearing in the bush, and by the sacred historian, that God himself was there, or such an angel who was also the great and blessed God?

*Exod. iv. 24.* "And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met *Moses*, and sought to kill him," upon which *Zipporah* circumcised her son. This seems to be an apparition of the Lord or *Jehovah* in the form of a man, something like God's wrestling with *Jacob*, and giving *Moses* a terrible reproof, because he had neglected to make his son pass under that sacred rite of circumcision.

*Exod. vi. 2.* "And God spake unto *Moses*, and said unto him, I am the Lord: and I appeared unto *Abraham*, unto *Isaac*, and unto *Jacob*, by the name of God almighty, but by my name of *Jehovah* was I not known to them." Can any thing more strongly express the ancient appearance of the true God himself to the patriarchs, who also appeared lately to *Moses* under a new name?

After this you have a multitude of instances, wherein the Lord or *Jehovah* conversed freely with *Moses* upon every occasion; whether under any visible appearance or figure, the scripture does not acquaint us, except in the following instances.

*Exod. xiii. 21.* "And the Lord, or *Jehovah*, went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud to lead them in the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light." Who in *Exod. xiv. 19.* is called the "angel of God which went before the camp of *Israel*"; he now removed and went behind them, and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them." And in verse 24. of this chapter, he is again called *Jehovah*: "It came to pass in the morning-watch, the

the Lord, that is, *Jehovah*, looked unto the host of the *Egyptians*, through the pillar of fire and of the cloud."

*Exod. xvi. 9.* *Moses* bid *Aaron* say to the people, "Come near before the Lord; and as *Aaron* spake to the whole congregation, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud; and the Lord spake unto *Moses*, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of *Israel*, — and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God."

*Exod. xvii. 5, 6, 7.* "The Lord said to *Moses*, Go on before the people, and take with thee the elders of *Israel*, — Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in *Horeb*, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it. — And he called the name of the place *Mossab* and *Meribab*, because of the chiding of the children of *Israel*, and because they tempted the Lord." Here God promises to stand before *Moses* on the rock, and the *Israelites* are said to tempt the Lord, which is applied to *Christ*, *1 Cor. x. 4.* This rock on which God stood is called *Christ*, that is, the type of *Christ* in whom God dwelt. And verse 9. they are said to tempt *Christ*, that is, they tempted God, appearing in a visible manner as standing on a rock.

The other place where they tempted God, is *Deut. xxi. 5, 6.* for want of bread and water, and "the Lord sent fiery serpents, &c." Both these are joined together, *Deut. viii. 15.* And in both places we may justly say *Christ* was tempted, that is, God appearing as the leader of *Israel* in the wilderness: For if it is expressly asserted, they tempted *Christ* when the serpents slew them, where there is not any express account of a visible appearance of God in the history, much more may it be said they tempted *Christ* when *Moses* smote the rock, where there was a visible appearance of God as standing on the rock.

*Exod. xix. 2, 3.* "*Israel* camped before the mount *Sinai*, and *Moses* went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain. Verse 9. And the Lord said unto *Moses*, Behold, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee. Verse 18. And mount *Sinai* was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Verse 19. *Moses* spake, and God answered him by a voice. Verse 20. And the Lord called *Moses* up to the top of the mount, and *Moses* went up." *Exod. xx. 1.* "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the land of *Egypt*, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me, &c. Verse 19. And the people said to *Moses*, Let not God speak to us, lest we die. Verse 21. And the people stood afar off, and *Moses* drew near unto the thick darkness where God was; and the Lord said unto *Moses*, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of *Israel*, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven." Thus God gave his laws to his people from mount *Sinai*; but neither *Moses* nor the people did at this time see any similitude or figure; for so *Moses* tells them, *Deut. iv. 12.* "And the Lord spake unto him out of the midst of the fire: Ye heard the voice of the words; but ye saw no similitude, only ye heard a voice."

And indeed it is probable that *Moses* never saw any form of the countenance, or face of a man, in all the appearances of God to him: And though it be said, *Deut. xxxiv. 10.* "There arose not a prophet since in *Israel* like unto *Moses*, whom the Lord knew face to face," yet we know that the same expression is used concerning the people of *Israel*, *Deut. v. 4.* "The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire." Therefore this can mean no more than that God spake with *Moses* and with the people as one man does to another,



when they mutually see each other's faces; though the favour and intimacy to which *Moses* was admitted, was much greater than what God bestowed on the people; because *Moses* held long dialogues with God several times, and could go and ask him any thing, almost upon every occasion. But still it seems probable, I think, that *Moses* never saw any human face in his converse with God; for when *Moses* in *Exod.* xxxiii. 18. desired to see the glory of God, God denied his request, and said, "Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live:" Upon the whole therefore, this expression face to face, in these texts, must signify no more, than a condescending manner of conversing with men by a voice, as one man converses with another, when they see each other's faces: though it is abundantly evident that some of the more ancient patriarchs conversed with God in the form of a man, and probably saw a human face at least in a confused vision, and as has been before declared.

Yet there remains some difficulty still in what sense God said, "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live," when it is probable that *Abraham* and *Jacob* long before, and afterward *Joshua* and *Gideon* saw the face of that angel who is called *Jehovah*: and my reason for it is this, because they took him to be a man when they first saw and spake with him, and therefore at first perhaps there was no peculiar lustre of glory, or cloud to conceal his face and distinguish him from a common man.

Answer. 1. It is granted that this expression cannot signify that no living man should ever see an apparition of God with a human face, at least in a general glimpse, for the reasons which are just now mentioned. 2. Nor can this awful expression of "not seeing the face of God and live," signify that no living man can see the essence of God as he is a spirit, and invisible to bodily eyes; for in this sense angels and human souls are invisible as well as God himself. Therefore, 3. I think it must intend that no man in this mortal state can bear the sight of such intense rays of light and glory as perhaps he assumes in heaven, and as would become the great God to assume on earth, if he appeared in all the corporeal splendor due to divine majesty appearing among men, as in *Christ's* appearance to *John*, *Rev.* i. 17. "he fell down as dead." And this exposition is yet more probable, if we consider that *St. Paul* describes God "as dwelling in that light which no man can approach unto;" and upon this account it is added, "whom no man hath seen, nor can see," *1 Tim.* vi. 16. For in this sense, "our God would be a consuming fire," *Heb.* xii. 29. and that in the most literal sense.

It is very probable, that the unsufferable blaze of the glory on the mercy-seat was always allayed with the cloud intervening, which might be an emblem or type of "God manifest in the flesh;" that is, God dwelling personally in the man *Jesus*, or in the flesh at his incarnation. And it is probable also for this reason, that the high priest, when he went into the most holy place, was to make the smoke of the incense arise between this glory and himself, that he might not die by his curiosity or too near approach.

*Exod.* xxiii. 20. "God says unto *Moses*, Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Verse 21. Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him." Here some critical writers have remarked two things, 1. That the name of God is sometimes put for God himself, as *Psal.* xx. 1. "The name of the God of *Jacob* defend thee:" So that God himself most probably dwelt in this angel. 2. It is said, my "name is in the midst of him" *בקרבו* which

which intimates a real indwelling; which also further appears, because it is said, "he will not pardon your transgressions;" now an authority to forgive, or not to forgive sins, is a prerogative of God. And why may we not suppose the fulness of the godhead dwelling in this angel, who was a spirit, as well as the "fulness of the godhead dwelling bodily" in the complete human nature of *Jesus Christ* when he took a body, as *Col. ii. 9*? I add yet further, that we have much reason to believe that this is the same angel, that so often assumed the sublimest names of God in his appearing both to *Moses* and to the patriarchs.

*Exod. xxiv. 9.* "Then went up *Moses* and *Aaron*, *Nadab* and *Abihu*, and seventy of the elders of *Israel*. Verse 10. And they saw the God of *Israel*, and there was under his feet, as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. Verse 11. And upon the nobles of the children of *Israel* he laid not his hand:" that is, he did not destroy them though they saw God, and it follows, "Also they saw God, and did eat and drink." Here it is probable they saw nothing but a very bright or fiery cloud, as in verse 16. But out of the midst of it God perhaps might converse with *Moses*; otherwise how could they know that this was the God of *Israel*? But I am inclined to believe they saw nothing of any human form; though indeed it is expressed, "there was a paved work of sapphire under his feet," which may signify only beneath him, that is, beneath this fiery cloud: but it is certain, his face they saw not. The children of *Israel* were so prone to idolatry, that God never gave them, nor perhaps even to *Moses*, the sight of an human face in all their visions, that there might be no foundation for framing an image like him, *Deut. iv. 16*. And it is evident that when *Moses* "went up into the mount," verse 16. it was only a cloud covered the mount, and the glory of the Lord abode upon mount *Sinai*; and the sight of the glory of God was like devouring fire on the top of the mount;" whence probably *St. Paul* might derive that expression, *Heb. xii. 29*. "Our God is a consuming fire."

*Exod. xxv. 22.* "And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark. Verse 22. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee, from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims, which are upon the ark of the testimony." *Exod. xxviii. 30, 35.* When *Aaron* goes into the holy place where the mercy seat stood, he is said to go in before the Lord. Upon this account the Lord of hosts is said to dwell between the cherubims, *1 Sam. iv. 4.* and *2 Sam. vi. 2.* and *Psal. lxxx. 1.* and *xcix. 1.* On this account also when the ark was moved from place to place, God himself is said to remove, *Psal. xlvii.* When *David* carried the ark into *Zion*, verse 5. "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." And when the ark came into the tabernacle or temple, *Psal. xxiv. 7.* "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in: The Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory." And when *Solomon* built the temple and brought in the ark of God to it, *2 Chron. vi. 41.* *Solomon* said, "Arise, O Lord God, into thy resting-place, thou and the ark of thy strength:" which is repeated, *Psal. cxxxii. 8.*

And concerning *Zion* it is said, *Psal. lxxviii. 18.* "This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in. Verse 17. The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: The Lord is among them as in *Sinai*, in the holy place." As God appeared on *Sinai* in a visible cloud, in fire or glory, where thousands of angels surrounded him, so God dwelt in *Zion* over the mercy-seat in a visible and bright cloud, between the cherubims, representing the attendance of angels. Then follows, verse 18. "Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive,"



tive," which is applied to *Christ*, *Ephes. iv. 8.* Thus the ascent of the ark of God to *Zion*, was a type of the ascension of *Christ* to heaven: For as God dwelt upon the ark between the cherubims in a bright cloud, under the *jewish* dispensation, and thence communicated his mind to men, and was there solemnly invoked and worshipped, so the "fulness of the godhead dwelt bodily in the man *Christ Jesus*," *Col. ii. 9.* and thus God in *Christ* reveals himself to us, and is worshipped and invoked by us under the christian dispensation; but still with this difference, that the union between God and man in *Christ Jesus* is much more near, more intimate and glorious, so as to make one complex person or God-man, and it is so constant as never to be dissolved; for *Christ*, who is of the seed of *David*, after the flesh, is by this union "God over all blessed for evermore." See *Rom. ix. 5.*

*Exod. xxxi. 18.* "When God had made an end of communing with *Moses* on mount *Sinai*, he gave unto him two tables of testimony, tables of stone written with the finger of God." This seems to intimate a human shape giving the tables to *Moses*, but not the vision of a human face!

In *Exod. xxxii. 2.* When *Israel* had offended God by the golden calf, he said, "I will send an angel before thee, and I will drive out the *canaanites*, &c. for I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people, lest I consume thee in the way." It is the opinion of doctor *Owen* on this place, that the angel which God in his anger told them he would send before them, when he himself refused to go up in the midst of them, was different from that angel whom he promised to them, *Exod. xxxii. 21.* "in whom the name of God was:" But upon their mourning and repentance, and upon the intercession of *Moses*, verses 4. and 14. God says, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest;" which is much the same thing as if he had said, the angel of my presence shall go with thee, for so this angel in whom the name of God dwelt, is called, *Isai. lxiii. 9.* "In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them."

*Exod. xxxiii. 9.* "*Moses* entered into the tabernacle, and the cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord \* talked with *Moses*, and all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent-door. Verse 11. And the Lord spake unto *Moses* face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." Yet, as I before intimated, perhaps this signifies only free mutual discourse like human and friendly conversation; for a few verses afterwards, God refused to let *Moses* see his face, verse 20. "Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live."

Upon this account it may be queried, whether *Moses* ever saw the likeness of a human face in all the appearances of God to him: yet there seems to be the similitude of the back of a man as to the shape of his body, in which God appeared to *Moses* at his request; for the Lord said, verse 21. "Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock. Verse 22. And it shall come to pass while my glory passeth by that I will put thee into a cleft of the rock, and I will cover thee with my hand while I pass by. Verse 23. And I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts, but my face shall not be seen."

And

\* Note, The Lord is not in the original in this place; and this is the only place that occurs to me — where the nominative case is wanting when God or the angel is said to talk with *Moses*, out of the cloud; but verse 11. immediately it is said, "The Lord, that is, *Jehovah* spake to *Moses* face to face." And *Exod. xxxiv. 5.* it is said, "The Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with *Moses* there, &c." So that this single ellipsis or subintellection of the nominative case, Lord, verse 9. ought not to be construed in opposition to all other places where the Lord himself is said to speak with *Moses*.

And accordingly in *Exod. xxxiv. 5.* "The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. Verse 6. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, &c. And *Moses* made haste and bowed his head toward the earth and worshipped. Verse 14. And the Lord said, thou shalt worship no other God, for the Lord, *Jehovah*, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

It is possible that these expressions of God's covering *Moses* with his hand while the glory of God past by, and *Moses* seeing the back parts of God, may signify no more than this, that in this particular appearance of God he arrayed himself in beams of light of such unsufferable splendor, that it would have destroyed the body of *Moses* had not God sheltered and protected him; and that the back parts which *Moses* saw, may only signify this same bright appearance after it was gone to a safer distance. Or we may suppose that there was a human form in this appearance, darting unsufferable light from his face, which for that reason could not be seen; and that *Moses* saw the similitude of the back of a man, after he was past to some distance from him.

It is not improbable but that in some of the other discoveries of God to *Moses* he might appear in the eyes of *Moses* in a human form with a bright, but not unsufferable shine of glory covering all his stature, even as the face of *Moses* himself might appear in the eyes of the children of *Israel*, when the skin of his face shone, so much that they were afraid to come nigh him, *Exod. xxxiv. 30.* And there is a great probability of it if we consider, that God said concerning *Moses*, *Numb. xii. 8.* "the similitude of the Lord shall he behold," that is, God in the figure of a man, though not his face.

God had promised in *Exod. xxix. 42.* "That at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation I will meet with the children of *Israel*, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory." This promise was accomplished, *Exod. xl. 34.* "When the tabernacle was erected, then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of God filled the tabernacle. Verse 35. And *Moses* was not able at that time to enter into the tabernacle of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."

*Levit. ix. 1, 4.* "*Moses* called *Aaron* and his sons and the elders of *Israel*, and said, to-day the Lord will appear unto you. Verse 5. And all the congregation drew near and stood before the Lord. Verse 6. And *Moses* said, this is the thing which the Lord commanded, that ye should do. And the glory of the Lord shall appear unto you. And when *Aaron* had offered the appointed offerings for himself and for the people, verse 23. *Moses* and *Aaron* went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out and blessed the people; and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. Verse 24. And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat, which when all the people saw they shouted, and fell on their faces." Here it may be observed, that the Lord is said to appear to them, verse 4. when verse 23. "it was the glory of the Lord appearing to the people," that is, a bright light and a consuming fire, verses 23, 24.

*Numb. xii. 5.* "And the Lord came down in the pillar of a cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called *Aaron* and *Miriam*, and they came forth. Verse 6. And he said, hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. Verse 7. My servant *Moses* is not so; who is faithful in all mine house. Verse 8. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches,



speeches, and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant *Moses*? Verse 9. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and he departed. Verse 10. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle, and behold *Miriam* became leprous white as snow."

It is not easy to say what the precise difference is between the various ways of God's ancient discoveries of himself to men; but I think thus much is very plain, which I before hinted, that though the common method of God's converse with the people and with *Aaron* was by a voice proceeding from the bright cloud or *shekinah*, yet that *Moses* was admitted to a more intimate converse with God in a way of dialogue, as one man talks freely with another, which the scripture calls face to face, and mouth to mouth: and on some particular occasions he beheld God in the shape or likeness of the body of a man, for it is said, "He shall behold the similitude of the Lord," though perhaps a cloud of glory might always cover his face, because the face of God was not to be seen by him.

*Numb. xxii. 9.* "And God came unto *Balaam*, and said, What men are these with thee? And *Balaam* said unto God, *Balak* the king of *Moab* hath sent unto me, saying, Come now curse the people, that is *Israel*. Verse 12. And God said unto *Balaam*, Thou shalt not go with them, thou shalt not curse the people; and *Balaam* said to the princes of *Balak*, The Lord or *Jehovah* refuseth to give me leave to go with you." And verse xxii. &c. there is the angel of the Lord meeting *Balaam* on the road to *Moab*, and conversing with him; but I do not find that this angel either assumes the name of the Lord, or is so called by the sacred writer: unless we may infer thus much by comparing what the angel said unto *Balaam*, verse 25. "The word that I shall speak unto thee, that shalt thou speak," with chapter xxiii. 3, 4. "*Balaam* said to *Balak*, peradventure the Lord will come to me: and God met *Balaam*. Verse 5. And the Lord or *Jehovah* put a word in *Balaam's* mouth, and said, Return unto *Balak*, and thus shalt thou speak, &c. Again, verse 16. And the Lord or *Jehovah* met *Balaam*, and put a word in his mouth, &c." Chapter xxiv. 2. "And *Balaam* lift up his eyes, and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he took up his parable, and said, The man who heard the words of God, who saw the vision of the almighty, having his eyes opened, hath said, How goodly are thy tents, O *Jacob*! &c." Whether this be sufficient to determine this angel to be *Jehovah*, I leave to the reader.

*Deut. xxxii. 33.* "The Lord your God went in the way before you in fire by night, to shew you by what way you should go, and in a cloud by day." *Deut. iv. 12.* "The Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of words, but saw no similitude, only a voice. Verse 16. Left ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure the likeness of male or female."

*Deut. xxiii. 13.* "Thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon, and thou shalt dig therewith, and cover that which cometh from thee: for the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp to deliver thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he see no unclean thing in thee." This text does not indeed prove any appearance of God, but may be only a representation of God walking through their camp after the manner of men, to impress a more awful idea of the presence of God upon the people of *Israel*, that they might abstain from all legal impurities of every kind.

*Joshua v. 13.* "When *Joshua* was by *Jericho*, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and

*Joshua*

*Joshua* went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? Verse 14. And he said, Nay, but as the captain of the host of the Lord am I now come; and *Joshua* fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? Verse 15. And the captain of the Lord's host said unto *Joshua*, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy; and *Joshua* did so." Chapter vi. 2. "And the Lord said unto *Joshua*, See I have given into thine hand *Jericho*, &c." Here it seems evident that the captain of the host of the Lord is also called the Lord or *Jehovah*; and *Joshua* is commanded, just as *Moses* was, to loose his shew from his foot, because the place was holy, that is, because God himself was present there.

*Judges* ii. 1. "And an angel of the Lord came up from *Gilgal* to *Bochim*, and said, I made you go up out of *Egypt*, and have brought you into the land which I swore unto your fathers, and I said, I will never break my covenant with you." This was certainly a human appearance, for the angel came from *Gilgal* to *Bochim*, which plainly intimates a visible person moving or passing from one place to another; yet the words are as plainly the language of God; so that, in all probability, this was also the angel of God's presence.

*Judges* vi. 11. "And there came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak which was in *Opbra*: and *Gideon* threshed wheat by the wine-press. Verse 12. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said unto him, the Lord *Jehovah* is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. Verse 13. And *Gideon* said unto him, O my Lord, if the Lord *Jehovah* be with us, why is all this befallen us? Verse 14. And the Lord *Jehovah* looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save *Israel* from the hand of the *Midianites*: Have not I sent thee?" Here is a long dialogue between the Lord and *Gideon*. Verse 20. "And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth; and he did so. Verse 21. Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and unleavened cakes, and there rose up fire out of the rock and consumed the flesh and the cakes: and the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight. Verse 22. And when *Gideon* perceived that he was an angel, *Gideon* said, alas, O Lord God, for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face. Verse 23. And the Lord said unto him, peace be unto thee; fear not, thou shalt not die."

On this transaction I make these few remarks:

1. This angel had doubtless a human shape, figure and voice, for he sat under an oak; and *Gideon* brought him a present of flesh and cakes to eat, thinking at first it might have been a man of God or a prophet; though when the angel bid him offer it in sacrifice, and then consumed it by a miraculous fire, he perceived that it was no man, but an angel of God; and it is hardly to be supposed, but that *Gideon* saw his face.

2. Here is an angel of the Lord, who by the sacred writer is several times called *Jehovah*; for these names the Lord or *Jehovah*, and the angel of the Lord, are used promiscuously by the historian, though *Gideon* did not know it was God himself.

3. The language which this angel speaks, is not such as would immediately determine *Gideon* to believe it was *Jehovah* or God himself who appeared, and therefore we find *Gideon* does not worship him nor address him as *Jehovah*.

4. Though *Gideon* does not expressly call this angel, God or *Jehovah*, but only perceived at last that he had seen an angel of the Lord, yet we may suppose that in his



recollection he took it to be that peculiar angel in whom God resided or dwelt, for he feared he should die because he had seen him. Now though there was an ancient and current opinion among the *Israelites*, that none could see the face of God and live, yet there does not seem to have been any such notion that death would ensue upon the sight of a common angel.

But however, whether *Gideon* supposed this angel to be inhabited by *Jehovah* or no, it is plain that the sacred historian calls him *Jehovah*.

*Judges* xiii. 3. "The angel of the Lord appeared to the wife of *Manoah*, and said unto her, thou shalt conceive and bear a son, &c. Verse 6. The woman came and told her husband, saying, a man of God came to me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible, &c. Verse 8. And *Manoah* entreated the Lord or *Jehovah*, and said, Let the man of God which thou didst send, come again to us. Verse 9. And God hearkened to the voice of *Manoah*, and the angel of God came again to the woman: she called her husband, and *Manoah* said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am. Verse 15. And *Manoah* said unto the angel of the Lord, Let us make ready a kid for thee. Verse 16. And the angel of the Lord said unto *Manoah*, I will not eat of thy bread, and if thou wilt offer a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord; for *Manoah* knew not that he was an angel of the Lord. Verse 17. And *Manoah* said to the angel of the Lord, What is thy name? And the angel said unto him, Why askest thou after my name, since it is a secret, אֱלֹהִים or wonderful?" The same name which is given to *Christ*, *Isa.* ix. 6. "His name shall be called, wonderful. Verse 19. So *Manoah* took a kid, with a meat offering, and offered it to the Lord: and the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. Verse 21. Then *Manoah* knew that he was an angel of the Lord. Verse 22. And *Manoah* said to his wife, we shall surely die, because we have seen God." Here also is such an angel in whom God is supposed to reside, for *Manoah* said, "we have seen God," and therefore he thought that they should both die.

I do not remember any appearance of God to *David*. He saw the angel of the Lord that was sent to spread a pestilence among the people, by the threshing-place of *Araunah* the *Jebusite*, *2 Sam.* xxiv. 16. "And *David* spake unto the Lord or *Jehovah*, when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and done wickedly." But it does plainly appear by all the circumstances of the history, that this was that peculiar angel in whom God dwelt, or that the angel was called *Jehovah*.

The Lord appeared also to *Solomon*, *1 Kings* iii. 5. and ix. 2. but it was in a dream by night, whence therefore I derive no inferences at present.

*1 Kings* xxii. 19. The prophet *Micaiah* said, "I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right-hand, and on his left: and the Lord said, Who shall persuade *Ahab*? &c." But this seems to be a vision divinely represented to the imagination of the prophet, from whence therefore I infer nothing concerning God's real appearances.

*Job* iv. 13. When *Eliphaz* represents the apparition of a spirit before his face in thoughts from the visions of the night, he does not give us sufficient ground to form any conclusions concerning the real appearance either of God or an angel, in a book of such sublime poetry, wherein this is introduced in a manner of what the poets call a machine.

*Isai.* vi. 1. "In the year that king *Uzziah* died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Verse 2. Above it stood the seraphims, each one had six wings, &c. Verse 3. And one cried un-

to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory. Verse 5. Then said I, Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts. Verse 8. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me. Verse 9. And he said, Go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not." This appearance of the LORD or *Jehovah* to *Isaiab* in his glory is expressly attributed to *Christ* by the apostle; *John* xii. 39, 40, 41. "These things said *Esaias* when he saw his glory and spake of him."

It has been objected indeed, that the word Lord in the first and eighth verses, is not *Jehovah* in the *hebrew*, but *Adonai*; but it is evident, that the word in the fifth verse is *Jehovah*. When the prophet says; "Mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts, *Jehovah Tzebaoth*;" the person therefore whom *Isaiab* saw was *Jehovah*.

*Ezekiel* often had the sight of God or of *Jehovah*. In chapters i. iii. viii. and x. &c. But as it is expressly said in *Ezekiel* i. 1. "As I was by the river of *Chebar*, the heavens were opened and I saw the visions of God;" so whether all these appearances were not purely visionary, may be questioned: however it may not be amiss to transcribe a few expressions of the sacred writer on this subject. *Ezek.* i. 26. "Above the firmament that was over the heads of the living creatures was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone, and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance as a man above upon it, from his loins upward and downward, as it were the appearance of fire, and the appearance of a rainbow round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord, or *Jehovah*. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake." *Ezek.* iii. 22. "And the hand of the Lord was upon me, and he said, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee: Then I arose and went forth into the plain, and behold the glory of the Lord stood there, as the glory which I saw by the river of *Chebar*." *Ezek.* viii. 1. "As I sat in mine house and the elders of *Judah* sat before me, the hand of the Lord God fell upon me; then I beheld and lo, a likeness as the appearance of fire from his loins downward and upward, &c. And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head, and the Spirit lift me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to *Jerusalem*: and behold the glory of the God of *Israel* was there according to that vision I saw in the plain." *Ezek.* x. 18. "Then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims. Verse 20. This is the living creature that I saw under the God of *Israel* by the river *Chebar*, &c."

*Dan.* iii. 25. *Nebuchadnezzar* when he had cast the three *jews* bound into the fiery furnace, said, "Lo, I see four men loose walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." It is not to be supposed here that *Nebuchadnezzar* knew the *Messiah* or *Christ*, who was the Son of God, but he means to express a divine and God-like form\*, which, verse 28. he calls

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the

\* It is sufficiently known to the learned, that in the oriental ways of speaking, almost every thing may be called a father, a son or a daughter; the son of pride, for a proud man; the son of wickedness, for a wicked man; the sons of the mighty, for mighty men; and the word God is also used to aggrandize any idea; the trees of God for noble fair trees, &c. so that in *Nebuchadnezzar's* mouth this phrase, the Son of God, can only mean a very glorious person above the appearance of mankind.



the angel of the God of *Sbadrak*, &c. though probably it might be the peculiar angel of God's presence, in whom was the name of God, and who is the only begotten Son of God.

*Daniel* had several visions, and in some of them God appeared to him, or *Jesus Christ* in the form of man, *Dan.* vii. 9, 10, 13, 14. "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him, thousands of thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him; and there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Let it be observed here, that I do not number this among the proper, and real appearances of *Christ* or God; for it is called a dream which *Daniel* had, and the visions of his head upon his bed, as verses 7, 13. yet it was a dream divinely inspired. Here the ancient of days represents the divine being, or God himself, clothed in light or brightness white as snow or wool: one like the son of man coming with the clouds of heaven, seems to be the Son of God or *Jesus Christ*, who is also the son of man, ascending in the clouds of heaven, and he came to the ancient of days, that is, to God the Father, and received his dominion, glory and exaltation at his ascension into heaven in a bright cloud: and it is probable, that from the language of this dream or vision, *Christ* borrows his name, the son of man: and it is evident that our Saviour's description of his own future appearance as the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, *Matth.* xxvi. 64. is borrowed from this vision, and his real ascension to heaven and his exaltation there, is but an accomplishment of this prophetic scene.

*Dan.* viii. 15. *Daniel* had seen a vision just before, and while he was seeking for the meaning of it, "Behold, said he, there stood before me as the appearance of a man, and I heard a man's voice which called and said, *Gabriel* make this man to understand the vision." Surely this man who appeared seems to be *Jesus Christ*, who had command over *Gabriel*, one of the chief angels.

*Dan.* x. 5. "I lift up mine eyes and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linnen, whose loins were girded with fine gold, &c." Here is the description of an appearance very like the appearance of *Christ* to the apostle *John*, *Rev.* i. 13. but whether this was the angel of God's presence, viz. *Christ*, or another angel, is hard to determine. Verse 10. "Behold, an hand touched me, and set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands, and he said unto me, O *Daniel*, a man greatly beloved, — stand upright, for to thee am I now sent — Fear not, for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand and chasten thyself before God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of *Persia* withstood me one and twenty days: but lo, *Michael*, one, or the first, of the chief princes came to help me, and I remained there with the kings of *Persia*. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days. Verse 20. Then said he, Now will I return to fight with the prince of *Persia*: — there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but *Michael* your prince." Here it is very probable that the prince of the kingdom of *Persia* is one of those fallen angels, principalities and powers of darkness, who by divine permission governed the heathen nations, and

and were worshipped amongst them as gods, for the apostle tells the christians that the gentiles sacrificed to devils, 1 Cor. x. 20. all under *Satan* their sovereign, who is the god of this world, until *Christ* at his resurrection and ascension spoiled these principalities and powers, and dispossessed them of their dominions, Col. ii. 15. and led them captive, *Psal.* lxxviii. 18. and took the heathen world for his possession, and into his own government. It cannot be a good angel, because he withstood the good angel that was sent to *Daniel* with a divine commission twenty-one days; and because the angel who was sent to *Daniel* went afterwards to fight with this prince of *Persia*.

It is also very probable that *Michael* is *Jesus Christ*, because he is called your prince, that is, the prince of the *jews*, and one, or the first of the princes, that is, the prime archangel\*. And in *Dan.* xii. 1. he is called "*Michael* the great prince, which standeth for the children of thy people," that is the prince or king of the *jews*, for such was *Jesus Christ* under the ancient dispensation; this was the known character of the *Messiah* among the *jews*; and as king of the *jews* he was sent into this world, then he came to his own, yet his own received him not, *John* i. 11.

What confirms this sentiment is that in *Rev.* xii. 7. when "there was war in heaven, *Michael* and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels," *Christ* as the head of the good angels, and *Satan* as the head of the evil angels maintained a war in heaven, that is, in the church, until the great dragon was cast out of the church, that old serpent called the devil and *Satan* which deceiveth the whole world. Then follows a loud voice in heaven, that is, the church, saying, "Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of his *Christ*;" that is, the power of *Michael* prevailing over the dragon, "for the accuser of the brethren who accused them before God day and night is cast down" by the prevalent intercession of *Christ* pleading for them, and by his dominion over all things which God gave him at his ascension into heaven.

*Amos* vii. 7, 8. "Behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumb-line with a plumb-line in his hand, and the Lord *Jehovah* said unto me, *Amos*, what seest thou? And I said, a plumb-line. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb-line in the midst of my people *Israel*, and I will not again pass by them any more." Here God appears evidently in a human figure to the prophet *Amos*, and the same human form seems to appear again to *Amos*, chapter ix. 1. "I saw the Lord, *Jehovah*, standing upon the altar, and he said, smite the lintel of the door that the posts may shake. Verse 2. Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring him down." And to make it appear that *Jehovah* is the peculiar name of the great God, he repeats, verse 6. what he had before said in chapter v. verse 8. "He that calleth the waters of the sea and poureth them out upon the face of the earth, the Lord or *Jehovah* is his name."

In many of the writings of the prophets it is said, "The Word of the Lord came unto them;" very frequently to *Ezekiel*, and sometimes to *Jeremiah* and others; when there is no evidence of any personal appearances to them at that time; though it is not improbable but at some of those seasons our blessed Saviour, who is called the *Logos*, or the Word of God, might appear to them in a human form, and dictate a  
divine

\* Yet it has been observed that though some of the fathers and our later divines, speak of several archangels, the scripture uses the word but twice, viz. *Jude* 9. and 1 *Thess.* iv. 16. and both times in the singular number. Perhaps this *Michael*, that is, *Christ* the king of the *jews*, is the only archangel, or prince and head of all angels.



divine message. And some think those words of our Saviour, *John* x. 35. "If he called them gods unto whom the Word of God came," may have a reference to *Christ's* own appearance to the prophets, as this glorious person called the Word.

I do not remember any places which seem to favour this sentiment so much as these three, viz. 1. *Gen.* xv. 1. "The Word of the Lord came unto *Abraham* in a vision, saying, Fear not, *Abraham*, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." 2. *Gen.* xxxii. 24, 28. "There wrestled a man with *Jacob* till the breaking of the day; and he said, thy name shall be called no more *Jacob*, but *Israel*." Concerning which appearance, it is recorded, 1 *Kings* xviii. 31. "The Word of the Lord came to *Jacob*, saying, *Israel* shall be thy name." And 3. in the beginning of the book of *Jonah*, chapter i. verses 1, 2, 3. "Now the Word of the Lord came unto *Jonah* the son of *Amittai*, saying, Arise, go to *Nineveh* that great city and cry against it. But *Jonah* rose up to flee unto *Tarsish* from the presence of the Lord, and he found a ship and went down into it to go unto *Tarsish* from the presence of the Lord." Now if *Jonah* had only an inward inspiration and no vision, how could he imagine that he could flee from this inspiration by changing his place? And why should it be expressed that he fled from the presence of the Lord, unless God had manifested some visible presence to him?

Yet on the other hand when I read, *Micah* i. 1. "The Word of the Lord which came to *Micah*, which he saw concerning *Samaria* and *Jerusalem*;" and when I read also, *Amos* i. 1. "The Words of *Amos* which he saw concerning *Israel*;" I am a little inclined to think that this expression in *Jonah* might be an *hebrew* idiom of speech among the prophets, attributing a sort of visible presence metaphorically to the Word or Words of God which came to them by inward inspiration, or perhaps by a voice: or it may be, the things themselves which they foretold, were represented to their imagination, and on this account the Word or Words of God may be represented as visible. But I leave this matter as a point of difficulty not sufficiently determined.

*Zech.* i. 7. "In the second year of *Darius* came the Word of the Lord unto *Zechariah*, saying, verse 8. I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood amongst the myrtle trees, and behind him were red horses speckled and white. Verse 9. Then said I, O my Lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said, I will shew thee what these be. Verse 10. And the man that stood among the myrtle trees said, These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. Verse 11. And they answered the angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and behold all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest. Verse 12. Then the angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on *Jerusalem*, and on the cities of *Judah* against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? Verse 13. And the Lord, that is *Jehovah*, answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words. Verse 14. So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I am jealous for *Jerusalem*, &c." Here observe this angel of the Lord which stood among the myrtle trees had the form of a man, verse 8. and is not called *Jehovah*: He seems to be our blessed Saviour interceding for *Jerusalem*; for we do not find common angels introduced as intercessors in scripture; there is but one Mediator between God and man, the man *Christ Jesus*. And the Lord, or *Jehovah*, answered him comfortably. Perhaps this answer of the Lord, or *Jehovah*, was a voice without any figure or appearance, But after all, it is difficult precisely to represent this whole scene, and to adjust every part of these transactions: There seems to

us to be some confusion in it, for want of knowing the various ways and methods of God's discovery of himself and his mind to the prophets.

*Ze&b. iii. 1.* "And he, that is, one of the angels whom he spake of, chapter ii. 4. shewed me *Joshua* the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and *Satan* standing at his right hand to resist him. Verse 2. And the Lord, *Jehovah*, said to *Satan*, the Lord, *Jehovah*, rebuke thee, O *Satan*, even the Lord, *Jehovah*, that hath chose *Jerusalem*, rebuke thee. Verse 3. Now *Joshua* was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. Verse 4. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him; and unto *Joshua* he said, Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of rayment, &c." Whether here was an appearance of *Jehovah*, or whether our Saviour appeared here only as a man or an angel, does not seem plainly determined by the words.

Having thus given a brief abridgment or historical narrative of the several appearances of God to men in the old testament, I proceed to make these few observations or remarks upon them, or rather to set forth in one short view the occasional observations which I made as I past along.

I. It is evident that the great and blessed God appeared several times of old in the form of a bright cloud or flame of fire, and from this cloud or fire proceeded a voice assuming the most glorious and awful names of God, viz. "the Lord, *Jehovah*, the God of *Abraham*, I am that I am, &c." whence all that saw and heard it must naturally infer that the great God dwelt in a most eminent manner and resided in that bright cloud of fire.

II. Sometimes this great and blessed God appeared in the form of a man or an angel. And indeed when the apparition is called an angel, in several places it was the real form of a man, because at first when the spectator saw it, he took it to be a man indeed: So *Abraham* saw three men, so *Jacob* wrestled with a man, so *Joshua* and *Gideon* and *Manoah* and his wife thought at first, that they saw and spoke with a man, who afterwards appeared to be an angel of the Lord. But it is evident that the true God resided or dwelt in this man or this angel, because sometimes he calls himself God, and assumes the highest names and characters of godhead; and sometimes the spectator calls him Lord or *Jehovah*, and God; and sometimes the sacred historian calls him *Jehovah* and God: And there are some instances wherein all these concur, as *Gen. xxviii.* and *Gen. xxxii.* compared with *Hos. xi.* and *Exod. iii.* Now if these things are a proof that the true God resided in the bright cloud or the fire, when he spoke from thence, it is at least as good a proof that the same great God resided in the angel to whom the same things are attributed.

III. There are several instances of the appearance of angels who do not assume to themselves any of the names or characters of God; so that it is evident that it was not the custom of common angels when sent by the great God to carry messages to men to assume divine titles, or speak with an air of divine authority in themselves, without the preface of—Thus saith the Lord—but there was one angel peculiarly distinguished from the rest "in whom the name of God was," as *Exod. xxiii.* and who is properly called the "angel of God's presence," *Isai. lxiii.* and "the presence of God," *Exod. xxiii.* and "the angel" emphatically, as in *Eccles. v. 6.* and who is very probably the same with the messenger or "angel of the covenant," *Mal. iii. 1.* And this also was the common opinion of the ancient jews, as is shewn in a dissertation on the Logos.

It may be further observed also under this head, that since our blessed Saviour, who is the angel of the covenant, came in the flesh, there have been many appearances of other



other angels; viz. to the shepherds, to *Joseph*, to *Christ* himself: to the disciples, viz. to women at the resurrection of *Christ*, and men at his ascension, to *St. Peter*, to *St. Paul*, to *St. John*, to *Cornelius*, and perhaps to others; but not one of them ever assumed the names, titles, characters, or worship belonging to God.

Thence we may confirm this inference, that the angel who under the old testament assumed divine titles, and accepted religious worship, was that peculiar angel of God's presence in whom God resided, or who was united to the godhead in a peculiar manner, even the pre-existent soul of *Christ*, who afterward took flesh and blood upon him, and was called *Jesus Christ* on earth.

And therefore since his incarnation no angel has ever appeared that durst call himself God, and assume divine titles, or accept of worship; but has rather expressly forbid the worship of him, as *Rev.* xix. 10. and xxii. 10.

IV. It is very plain and obvious to every reader, that one of the most glorious and illustrious apparitions of the great God, even that wherein the seraphs adore him as the Lord of the whole earth, and who filled the earth with his glory, and wherein *Isaiab* calls him, the king, the Lord of hosts, is expressly applied to our Lord *Jesus Christ* in the new testament, *John* xii. "These things said *Esaias*, when he saw his glory and spake of him." Now this may be a key to explain the rest, and makes it very probable that *Christ* was the person who thus often appeared.

V. It is generally agreed by all christian writers, even from the most primitive times, that God considered under the idea and character of paternity, and in the person of the Father, is always represented as invisible, whom no man hath seen nor can see: But *Jesus Christ* is described as the image of the invisible God, the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person, he in whom the Father dwells, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." He is that Word of God by whom the great and blessed God manifests himself, and his mind and will, as a man manifests his mind or will by his word: He represents himself one with God the Father, "I and the Father are one." And *St. Paul* calls him God manifest in the flesh. Now as the prophet *Isaiab* and the apostle *John* compared together assure us that *Christ* was the person who appeared in one of these most glorious and illustrious appearances of God under the old testament, so there is the most abundant probability from all these things considered, that *Jesus Christ* was that angel who generally appeared in ancient times to the patriarchs and to the jews, assuming the peculiar and incommunicable names of God, and manifesting the invisible God to men.

That expression of *St. Paul*, *1 Cor.* x. 9. adds weight to this argument, "Neither let us tempt *Christ* as some of them tempted and were destroyed by serpents." *St. Paul* well knew that when God sent his angel to lead *Israel* in the wilderness, he bid them "Beware of him, provoke him not, he will not pardon your sins, for my name is in him:" And the apostle here seems plainly to refer to this same person, this angel, even *Christ*, whom they tempted or provoked, and he did not pardon them, but sent serpents to destroy them; and yet the person who was thus tempted and provoked, is also called the Lord God. *Deut.* vi. 16. "Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted him in *Massab*."

VI. Thence also I think we may infer, that there is such a peculiar union between the great God and the man *Jesus Christ* in his angelic, as well as in his incarnate state, as that he is properly represented as God-man in one complex person: he that was the angel of the presence of God, and in whom God dwelt under the ancient dispensations, has now took flesh and blood upon him, and is God manifest in the flesh; he that is of the seed of *David*, was and is God over all blessed for ever. Amen.

To all this let me subjoin some testimonies both of ancients and moderns as they are cited by bishop Bull in his "defence of the nicene faith," section i. chapter i. section xi.

*Trypho* the jew in his dialogue with *Justin Martyr* maintains, that there were two present in the appearance made to *Moses* in the burning bush, viz. "God and an angel; that the angel appeared in the flame of fire, and that God in the angel spake with *Moses*." To which *Justin* replies, that that may very well be granted according to the christian doctrine. And indeed *Trypho's* opinion seems to have been generally received and approved amongst the more ancient jews; for *Stephen* teaches us, it was an "angel who appeared to *Moses* in the bush," *Acts* vii. 30. and yet that God himself spake these words to *Moses*, verses 31, 32, 33. "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of *Abraham*, &c." compare *Exodus* iii. 2. with verses 4, 5, 6.

*Athanasius*, oratione quarta contra Arianos. "He that appeared was an angel, but God spake in him."

*Clemens Alexandrinus*. "The Son of God who led *Moses* was an angel, bringing with him the evangelical and principal power of the Word:" A little after he adds, "The Logos or Word was an angel;" and he calls the Son of God the mystical angel.

*Austin contra Maxim*: libro iii. says, "I ask who appeared to *Moses* in the fire? The scripture itself declares it was an angel appeared; but that God was in that angel, who can doubt?"

*Gregory* in his preface to *Job* the second, says, "The angel who appeared to *Moses* is sometimes called an angel, and sometimes God; when he that speaks outwardly is governed by him that is within, he is called an angel, to signify his obedience, and the Lord to denote the inspiration."

And *Grotius* himself on *Gal.* iii. 19. confesses that he who gave the law in *Sinai* was a singular or special angel, attended by other angels; yet not a mere angel, but one with whom the Logos was present. Now it is well known, that by the Logos *Grotius* means the divine Word or Wisdom.

## S E C T I O N II.

*The difficulties relating to this account of the appearances of God under the old Testament relieved and adjusted.*

Objection I. **S**INCE the true God appeared and resided in the fiery bush, in the flame on mount *Sinai*, in the pillar of cloud and fire that conducted the *Israelites*, and in the bright light that shone sometimes at the door of the tabernacle, and then dwelt on the mercy-seat between the cherubims; the *Socinians* say, Why may not any of these things be called the true God or *Jehovah*, as well as the angel in whom God dwelt? And especially since God spake out of the midst of this cloud or fire, as well as he spake by the angel, so that all these were representatives, symbols, or tokens of the presence of the true God.

And this objection of the *Socinians* may be further enforced, when we consider, that when this bright cloud moved, God is said to move; where this bright cloud dwelt or rested, God is said to dwell or rest. God himself is said to go before the *Israelites* in the wilderness when the cloud went before them. God dwelt in the bush when the fire was there. God is said to dwell between the cherubims, *Psal.* lxxx. 1. because the bright light was there. "God is gone up with a shout; the Lord, that is, *Jehovah*,



*Jehovah*, with the sound of a trumpet," *Psal.* xlvii. 5. when the ark where God dwelt was carried up to *Zion*: and upon this occasion *David* addresses God, *Psal.* lxxviii. 18. "Thou hast ascended on high, when the ark was carried up to the hill which God desired to dwell in," verse 16. What more than this can be said concerning the angel? Or what greater reasons can be given why this angel should be called God rather than the cloud or fire, which also might be called God in a figurative sense, because they were symbols of the divine presence?

Answer. In order to set this matter in a true light, we may consider the following things.

1. Whatsoever be our conception of the distinct personalities in the divine nature, yet the godhead has been generally allowed to be one and the same in all the three persons. If therefore *Christ* be God, he is the same one God as the Father, that is, he has the same, and not another godhead.

2. Whensoever this great God is said to appear in scripture, it is generally attributed to *Jesus Christ*, or the second person in the sacred three. This is agreed both by *arians* and *athanasians*: and there is this reason for it, that God under the personality of the Father may always maintain the character of the invisible God. The ancients of all parties were united in this sentiment.

3. God frequently manifested himself or appeared to men under the old testament in and by a corporal resemblance as inhabiting in a cloud, or light, or fire; and sometimes he manifested himself also to men as residing in or inhabiting a man or an angel under the old testament; for so he appeared to *Abraham*, to *Jacob*, &c. Whatsoever created being God resided in, this was called the *shekinah* or habitation of God. If it was a bright light or fire, it was a corporeal *shekinah*. If it was a man or an angel, it might be called an intellectual *shekinah*, and most probably in an human form\*.

4. Whatsoever habitation God assumed, that habitation itself, whether corporeal or intellectual, is not called God merely upon the account that God resided there, unless you include also the divine inhabitant, that is, God himself; so that neither the cloud, nor the bush, nor the fire, nor the man, or angel, are ever represented as God, or called *Jehovah*, without including the idea of that godhead that resided or inhabited in them. So when it is said, "God is gone up with a shout," *Psal.* xlvii. it doth not mean merely the ark which was carried up to *Zion*, but God dwelling on the ark or the mercy-seat. And in the same manner the gestures, motions and appearances are ascribed to God, which were visible in that body in which God at that time resided, and which he made the symbol of his presence: but this body is never called God when taken alone, without including the present godhead or almighty Spirit residing there.

5. Hence

\* The hebrew word *shekinah* signifies a habitation or dwelling: and it was the name which the ancient jews gave to that bright cloud or fire wherein God dwelt upon the ark between the cherubims, and in which he often appeared to the patriarchs and to *Moses*. They also gave the same name of *shekinah* to the glorious Spirit in and by which God acted or manifested himself to men, whether in a visible or invisible manner; that is, whether he came with a cloud of light, or with a voice, or only by silent and secret influences: for they call this *shekinah* by the names of *Ménra*, *Logos*, or the *Word of God*; and they not only suppose this *shekinah* to take possession of the tabernacle and the temple, and to reside there in the form of light, but it was a saying amongst them, that "where two or three are met together to read or study the law, the *shekinah* is with them," though in an invisible manner; which is parallel to the words of *Christ*, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," *Matth.* xviii. 20. See Dissertation iv. on the *Logos*, section iii. page 558—569.

5. Hence it will follow, that the words God, Lord, Almighty, *Jehovah*, which are used in scripture on these occasions, are not sunk into a figurative or diminutive sense on purpose to be applied metaphorically to a cloud, a fire, or an angel, as a resemblance or emblem of the true God, or as a symbol of his presence; but these divine names and titles are preserved in their original and most sublime and divine sense, and applied to God himself considered in and together with these his habitations or places of residence.

6. It is very probable that the great God never resided, if I may so speak, immediately in any corporeal habitation without the medium of an angelic \* or intellectual being by whom he spoke and acted, and by whom he moved this corporeal habitation as he pleased. We have good reason to suppose that the angel of God's presence, the angel of the covenant, the angel in whom was the name of God, was still the more immediate *Shekinah* or residence of God, whether he dwelt mediately in a cloud, or light, or fire, or a human shape. And on this account in the narration of the same transaction it is expressed sometimes that the angel of the Lord appeared, and sometimes the Lord God himself appeared, for instance, to *Moses* in the bush, to *Abraham*, &c. The names God, or the Lord, or the angel, are used promiscuously in these narratives.

Thus it was not properly the cloud, light, or fire, but the angel who was intimately and immediately united to godhead; and it was this angel who assumed the names, titles and characters of God, Lord, and *Jehovah*; for we may reasonably suppose that the union between God and this glorious angel, that is, the pre-existent soul of *Jesus Christ* in its non-incarnate or angelic state, was incomparably more near and intimate than the union of the great God with a pillar of cloud or fire: and upon this account the angel may be called God in a more proper manner than the fire, cloud or bush could ever be, because of the intimacy of the union which made God and this angel one complex person.

7. None of the corporeal appearances, or habitations of God, viz. the cloud, the light, the fire, are said in scripture to speak to man, it is only said, that God spake out of them. The cloud, the fire, the bush, are never said to assume these names or titles, "I am the Lord, I am God almighty, I am the God of *Israel*." But now the angel who appeared speaks to men, and he assumes these divine names and titles in the old testament, as is abundantly evident in *Exodus* iii. and in other places; and so doth *Jesus Christ* in the new testament, *Rev.* i. and ii. and iii. "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, &c." Thence we may justly infer, there was a nearer and more intimate union between the godhead and that angel than between God and the cloud, or fire, &c. even such an union as may be called personal, whereby God and the angel may be looked upon as one

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\* Note, Though in several places I represent *Christ* in his pre-existent state as an angel according to scripture, yet I always suppose this pre-existent soul of *Christ* to be a proper human spirit, that is, such a spirit as by its own nature is suited to act in vital union with a human animal body. These things are proved at large in the last of these discourses. The reason why he is called an angel, is partly because he was then an unbodied spirit, and lived as angels do, not united to an animal body; and partly because he was sent as the Father's messenger, which is the meaning of the word angel in the original languages, *greek* and *hebrew*.

Note further, That this does not at all hinder the human soul of *Christ* from having intellectual capacities and powers vastly superior to any other human soul, or to any angel in heaven, even as the capacities and intellectual powers of one man are vastly superior to another, as the soul of *Milton* or *Sir Isaac Newton* to an idiot; and especially while we consider this human soul as constantly inhabited by, and personally united to the eternal godhead, we have abundant reason to suppose his human faculties superior to those of any other creature.



complex intelligent agent or person: and thus *Christ* may be called, as I remember one or more of those learned writers have called him, the God-angel before he was complete God-man.

8. None of these corporeal appearances or habitations of God, neither the cloud, nor the fire, nor the bright light, are expressly and directly called God by the holy writers in a categorical and express manner. He is *Emmanuel*, or God with us: He is *Jehovah* our righteousness: He is God over all, blessed for ever: which further shews a more intimate union between the godhead and the man *Jesus*, than there was between God and the cloud or fire, and it shews also that *Christ* is a complex person or God-man.

9. Observe also, that God did not always or constantly dwell in the same corporeal habitation, that is, cloud, or fire, but God constantly resided in this angel of the covenant, this angel of his presence, who was his own Son: He kept the same intellectual habitation always, though he frequently changed his corporeal habitation. God who was always united to this unbodied human spirit or angel did also sometimes assume a cloud, a fire, a bush, or the figure of a man to appear in under the old testament, but it was only for a season; and these were only so many different præludiums to his future incarnation or dwelling in flesh: So that the angel of God's presence or human soul of *Christ* in his angelic state, who was the constant *shekinah* or habitation of the godhead, was one with God, and might be much better called God than the cloud or fire which were but occasional habitations.

10. When this glorious angel, the human spirit or soul of *Christ*, together with his divine inhabitant the indwelling godhead, descended from his angelic state, and was made actual "partaker of flesh and blood, he was then made a little lower than the angels," *Heb. ii. 9*. He took human flesh into a constant partnership of his person, and became a man. "The Word, who was God, was made flesh," *John i. 1, 14*. This never was said, nor could it ever properly be said concerning the cloud or the fire. When God was manifest in the flesh, this flesh was united into one person with the angel, and became the human or bodily *shekinah*, or constant habitation of God. "In him dwelt all the fulness of the godhead bodily," *Col. ii*. Then *Jesus Christ*, who was in all former ages the God-angel in a proper and complete sense, became God-man.

Though the cloud or the fire could not properly be called God because they were not thus united into one person with God, nor in the angel in whom God dwelt, yet the man *Jesus* as united in a personal manner to the divine nature, might properly be called the true God. It could not be said concerning the cloud or fire, that they were assumed to be parts of the person of *Christ*, but it might be said concerning this angel, that is, the soul of *Christ*, and concerning his body, they were parts of his complex person: and thus *Christ* in his complex person hath the names of deity and humanity given him, he that is of "the seed of *David* after the flesh, is God over all, blessed for evermore. Amen." *Rom. ix. 3, 4, 5*.

Objection II. Doth not the apostle to the *Hebrews*, chapter i. verses 1, 2. sufficiently intimate, that this angel by whom God conversed with men was not his own Son *Jesus*, when he says, "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son?" Does not this imply that God did not speak by his Son under the old testament?

Answer I. We may answer this difficulty thus: Though the angel who revealed the will of God to the patriarchs and prophets was really *Jesus Christ* the Son of God, yet

yet he then spake by a corporeal medium and organs, which he assumed for that occasion to form a voice, which medium was not part of his person, or personally united to him; therefore the Son of God did not speak immediately to men by himself, that is, by his own person, but spake by the prophets, and by corporeal shapes, &c. Yet when he assumed flesh and blood actually into a personal union with himself, when he made this flesh a part of his person, and became a complete man by a miraculous conception, then he was more completely the Son of God both in soul and body, and then as the Son of God he spake immediately by himself, by his own complete person, that is, soul and body, to mankind; or God spake to mankind by the very person of his Son, which was never done in the same manner under the old testament.

Nor is this any strange exposition, for the ancient fathers are wont to speak to the same purpose: *Justin Martyr* speaks thus in his Apology, "The Word foretold things to come by the prophets heretofore, but when he was made like unto us, he taught us these things by himself." So *Clemens Alexandrinus* says, "The Lord was truly the instructor of the ancient people by *Moses*, but he is the guide of his new people by himself face to face." See bishop *Bull's* defence of the nicene faith, section i. chapter. i.

Answer II. But I give yet a further answer to this objection in the following manner, viz. Though the angel by whom God spake to the prophets and to the patriarchs was really *Jesus Christ* or the Son of God, yet he did not appear at that time under his filial character as God's own Son, but he appeared in his angelic character, or as a heavenly messenger, which was suited to the pre-existent state of the soul of *Christ*; whereas under the new testament God speaks to us by his Son *Jesus Christ* under the special and known character of his own Son, as being now revealed to have been the only begotten Son of God in his pre-existent state, *John* i. 14, 18. and as having a more conspicuous or sensible character of his divine sonship added to him, by his being born of a virgin without an earthly father by the immediate influence of the Spirit of God, *Luke* i. 35. and was named the Son of God on this account; and had also a further claim to this honourable title Son of God, when he was raised from the dead, as *St. Paul* explains that expression of the *Psalmist*, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," *Psal.* ii. 6. compared with *Acts* xiii. 33. and is therefore called by the same apostle, "the first-born from the dead," *Col* i. 15. It is plain therefore, that though *Christ* was the Son of God in his pre-existent state, yet he appeared and acted rather under the character of an angel of old, and not under the character of a Son till the days of the gospel.

It is the frequent custom of scripture to speak of things as they appear to men, and not always just as they are in themselves, for this is most suited to the bulk of mankind. Therefore the scripture speaks of the sun's rising and going down, and it's rejoicing to run a race, and of the heavens being fixed upon pillars, &c. which are all modes of expression according to appearance, and not according to the reality of things. So when the angel, who is called God, wrestled with *Jacob*, it is said a man wrestled with him, because he appeared as a man, *Gen.* iii. 24. So three men came to *Abraham*, *Gen.* xviii. 2. because they appeared as men, though one of them afterward evidently was known to be God, and the other two were angels. And so *Christ* never appearing to the patriarchs and prophets, and instructing them under the character of the Son of God in the old testament; and being much unknown to the world under that name, it was no wonder that the apostle should represent

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God as beginning to speak to us by his Son under the new testament \* : This method of solving the difficulty will have an happy influence also to remove the following objection.

Objection III. Though this angel spake oftentimes in the name of God under the old testament, though he assumed the glorious titles of God, and spoke words which must properly belong to God, yet it does not follow, that this angel was the true God, or that there was any such personal union between the divine nature and this angel, because there are other instances wherein the titles and names of God are assumed, and words proper to God are spoken, wherein it is very evident from scripture that God was not the speaker. Consider what the scripture declares concerning the giving of the law at mount *Sinai* : It is expressly said, *Exod. xx. 1, 2.* "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, &c." Yet St. *Stephen* tells them, *Acts vii. 53.* "They received the law by the disposition of angels." And St. *Paul*, *Gal. iii. 19.* says, "the law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." And *Heb. ii. 2, 3.* it is expressly called, "The word spoken by angels, and distinguished from the word spoken by *Christ*. If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which first began to be spoken by the Lord?" Now if the words at the giving of the law were spoken either by the person of the Father, or by the person of the Son of God, then the apostle's argument is lost, since it is built upon this supposition, that the gospel is published by a person superior to him, or them who published the law. But the apostle's argument is certainly strong, and thence it will follow, that the angel who spoke the law was neither God himself, nor *Jesus Christ*, and yet he assumes divine language, I am the Lord thy God, &c.

Answer. It was not only the sense of all the ancient writers, the most primitive fathers of the christian church, but it is allowed by most of the *arians* themselves who make this objection, that *Christ* himself was present at *Sinai* and was employed in giving the law, *Psal. lxxviii. 17.* "The Lord is among them as in *Sinai*, even he who ascended on high and led captivity captive," *Eph. iv. 8.* Now the law may still be said to be given, declared or published by angels who attended by thousands as ministering Spirits on the Lord *Christ*, and yet the words might be spoken by *Christ* himself, the great God-man, or God-angel, or the angel in whom God dwelt, at the head of them ; for he appeared there, not as the Son of God, for he was then utterly unknown under that filial name or character, but he appeared in his angelic character as the great, the peculiar, the extraordinary angel or messenger of the covenant, the angel of God's presence, the angel who spake to *Moses* in mount *Sinai*, *Acts vii. 38.* and spake to the people also, as the angel in whom God dwelt, or, which is much the same, as the great God dwelling in the angel.

Now in the new testament when this glorious person appeared amongst men as the Son of God, when he was discovered to be so in his body by his extraordinary conception, *Luke i. 35.* when he was further made the Son of God by his being begotten from the dead, as St. *Paul* explains *David*, *Acts xiii. 33. Col. i. 18.* and declared "with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead,"

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It might be added also, that it is expressed so often and so strongly by the sacred historian, that God spake the words of the law, that the *Israelites* heard God speaking to them out of the fire, and that it was the voice of God, that out of heaven God made them to hear his voice; and that they might know that *Jehovah* he is God in heaven above, *Exod. xx. Deut. iv. 10, 12, 33—39.* that all things concur to persuade us that the angel who spake the words was also *Jehovah*, or the God of *Israel*.

Objection IV. Is there any necessity that we should suppose God himself to be thus personally united to this angel who appeared under the old testament? Is it not sufficient to suppose that a glorious angel might come as a representative and deputy of the great God? and being clothed with divine authority, and representing the sacred majesty of God, might he not assume the incommunicable names and titles and worship of God, as being God's representative or ambassador to the children of men?

And this objection is yet enforced from this consideration, that some persons have pretended, that in the eastern parts such as delivered messages from others, did use to speak in the same manner as those very persons would have done in whose name they came, for which some have cited one or two historical passages out of the bible.

Answer. See this sort of objection very well answered by the ingenious Mr. *John Hughes of Ware*, in his remarks on doctor *Bennet's* discourse on the trinity, page 47. And many other authors treating on this subject, have given some good solutions to this pretence. The substance of what I have to say at present is chiefly borrowed from others, and shall be disposed under the following heads, whereby I think this difficulty will be effectually removed.

1. The instances which have been brought from the scripture history of messengers speaking in the name of their principals, without any distinguishing preface, have been happily expounded in another manner by learned critics, so as to cut off all pretences of this kind and all foundation for this objection which would be too large to repeat at present. See Mr. *Hughes's* remarks.

2. Supposing that such a conduct might be customary between man and man in common affairs of life, yet when was it known that the ambassador of an earthly monarch ever took so much upon him, or spoke in this language? What ambassador ever said, I am the king of *France* or *Spain*, or I am the king of *Egypt* or of *Babylon*? What ambassador did ever receive such honours, as that his master could receive no higher if he were personally present? What prince would ever endure any thing like this to be done by or to his representative? When *Rabshakeb* was sent with a threatening commission from *Sennacherib*, he does not himself assume the words of his prince, *Isai. xxxvi. 4, 12, 13.* for *Rabshakeb* said, "Thus saith the great king, the king of *Assyria*, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? And again, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of *Assyria*: And again, My master hath sent me to speak these words." Thus neither in eastern nor western nations do we find ambassadors use the style, and assume the name and honour of their princes to themselves: and who can believe that the only ambassador that calls himself by his master's name, assumes his master's titles, and style to himself, and receives the homage that is due to him, should be the ambassador of the great God the Creator and Lord of the world? But this leads me to the third consideration.

3. If this were ever practised by the ambassadors of earthly princes, yet it would by no means follow, that a messenger from the great and eternal God, the king of heaven,

heaven, should personate this great God himself in delivering his errands, without any evident hints to distinguish the ambassador from God himself. There is an infinite distance between the great God and a mere creature, even the most excellent creature, and that when it is employed as an ambassador for God. There is some proportion between the highest prince and the lowest of mankind; and therefore though one man may personate another, yet no creature can with safety to God's honour or to man's duty personate the great God. There is a much greater danger in mistaking a creature for God, and paying that worship to a creature which is appropriated to God, than there is in mistaking the meanest man for the greatest monarch: One would be a misdemeanor between man and man, the other seems to be plain idolatry, and paying the peculiar honours of God to a creature.

And yet such a mistake seems to be unavoidable, if a creature might thus assume divine names and titles to himself; for it may readily be supposed that God himself might also assume a visible appearance like that of an angel, and by consequence without an express revelation, in such a case, it would be impossible to distinguish the one from the other, that is, to know which was God in the form of an angel, and which was the angel personating God. Now in this view of things, religious worship must have been either neglected to the real deity, or else must have been paid to an angel. Therefore it seems no way likely that the great God who is all-wise and all-good, should so little consult his own honour or the happiness and duty of mankind, as to indulge such a mistake, or to lay unavoidable foundations for it, and temptations to it.

4. If it were possible in the nature of things that the great God should depute a creature for his ambassador or representative, and give him a commission to assume divine titles, and to receive divine worship, yet God seems to have declared in his Word that he will not do it, for he hath declared himself to be a jealous God, jealous of his own name and honour, and to that degree, that he borrows one of his glorious titles from this his jealousy, *Exod. xxxiv. 14.* "Thou shalt worship no other God, for the Lord thy God whose name is JEALOUS, is a jealous God." See *Exod. xx. 5. Deut. iv. 24. and v. 9. and vi. 15.* And he is resolved he will not give away his name and glory, nor the glory of his name to any other being. *Isai. xlii. 8.* "I am *Jehovah*, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another." Mankind who are led by their senses are so prone to idolatry, that they have been always very ready to take occasion to idolize and worship any sensible appearances which have looked any thing like divine; and the great God our Creator knows our infirmity, and therefore he hath declared, that he would not give his name and glory to another, especially not to any sensible appearance, lest he should give too strong a temptation to men to practice idol-worship, and pay divine honours to a creature.

5. Mr. *Hughes* in his dispute with doctor *Bennet* on this subject, page 53. declares that, "after all that flourish the doctor had made upon this notion of his, that divine angels were wont to personate the deity, he hath not in reality furnished out one single proof thereof: his instances among men being mere oversights, and his instances among the angels are by himself declared to be meant only of *Christ*, the angel of the covenant, the angel of God's presence; he acknowledges it was *Christ* who personated the divine majesty at those times, which we do not find, saith he, that any other angel ever did, though so many of them have been employed as the very or true God's ambassadors to men."

6. The ancient *jews* would by no means allow of this notion of a mere angel's assuming the names and titles of God. It is plain by the opinion of *Trypho*, which



*Justin Martyr* relates, that the ancient jews supposed God himself to be present with this angel; for that they never dared to imagine that a mere angel would call himself the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, and would admit such divine honours as *Moses* and *Abraham*, and *Joshua* paid to him in the name of God. "Such an opinion was too absurd and horrid for them to entertain," as bishop *Bull* expresses it; and he adds, "it is a sort of impiety to imagine that angels would ever assume such a dignity, or that God would communicate his incommunicable name to them, or any authority for such a representation of himself, in which a mere creature assumed to himself all those things which belonged to God."

The learned *Camero* in his annotations on the *hebrews*, chapter ii. verse 2. very well expresses it, "Though lawyers may put on the persons of their clients, yet it was never heard that an ambassador when he delivers the commands of his prince, ever spoke otherwise than in the third person, My prince speaks this. The prophets give us an illustrious testimony of this matter, who continually introduce this solemn form, Thus saith the Lord. And in visions angels profess themselves to be sent of God." *Grotius* himself confesses, that it "was not a mere angel gave the law in *Sinai*, but an angel with whom the Logos or divine Word was present."

This objection has been indeed carried on further by a late ingenious writer, by way of similitude. "Suppose we hear of king *George*'s speech to the parliament, we know that king *George* doth not speak it himself, but gives the speech to my Lord Chancellor, and he reads it: Now if a man upon hearing my Lord Chancellor speak those words to the parliament, should conclude that he is king *George*, he would certainly be mistaken:" And therefore though an angel who represents God assumes divine titles, we cannot infer that he is God.

Answer I. It is sufficiently and publicly known that king *George* gives the speech to my Lord Chancellor, and that king *George* himself also is present there, and visible on the throne: And on both these accounts there is no manner of danger of our mistaking the one for the other. But if king *George* were invisible, or did not appear, and my Lord Chancellor, arrayed in royal robes, assumed the title and used the very words of the king, without any preface or intimation that king *George* sent him to speak thus, how should any strangers know, unless they were told, that this was not the king himself? And how could the people of *Israel* know, that it was not God who spoke the words of the law to them, when the bright array, and the title of God are assumed, and the language is properly the language of God.

But I add, secondly,

Answer II. If the Lord Chancellor not only spoke words belonging to the king without any such preface, as, Thus saith the king: If he not only assumed the proper name and the titles of king *George*, the king himself being absent or invisible, but if the historians also declared that it was king *George* that spoke these words, if they called it the voice of king *George*, and if the spectators called him king, addressed to him as king, and worshipped him as such, would there not be abundant ground for a most pernicious mistake among all those who in after-ages should read this history? Now this is the present case, *Jehovah* or God himself is invisible, and was not seen by eyes of flesh; and not only the angel who appeared in the old testament assumed the divine names and titles of *Jehovah* or God himself, without any distinguishing preface of, Thus saith the Lord, but the sacred historian declares to us, it was God appeared, and it was God spake, it was the voice of God, even of *Jehovah*, the God of *Israel*; and the persons also with whom he conversed, viz. *Abraham*, *Moses*, and the children of *Israel*, &c. called him God, and Lord, and

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worshipped him as such. Now let us put all these things together, and there seems to be an unavoidable occasion given for a very dangerous mistake to all the readers of this history, if God himself, even *Jehovah*, the God of *Israel*, did not appear; if the angel who appeared and spake was not so inhabited by God, so united to God and so intimately one with God, as to lay a foundation for all this representation of things.

All these considerations joined together in this view appear to me richly sufficient to answer the present objection, and to preclude the notion of a common angel sent in the name of God and assuming the peculiar titles of godhead. Surely this angel or spirit was God himself, that is, was intimately and personally united to the God of *Israel*, and thereby became one complex person in two distinct natures, one common principle of intelligent action, and had a right to those divine titles according to the forms of language in all nations.

Objection V. Though it should be allowed that God was present with this angel, and resided in him, and spake by him, yet is this sufficient to make a personal union between God and the angel? or is it ground enough to say that God and the angel were one complex person?

Answer. The most common and most familiar idea that we have of a complex person is human nature or man, who is made up of a soul and body. Let us now consider whether most of those mutual relations or communications between soul and body which render man a complex person are not found in this glorious person composed of the great God and this angel.

Has the body of a man a nearer relation to his soul than any other body in the world? So had this angel a nearer relation to God than any other creature whatsoever. Is the soul said to inhabit the body, or reside in it constantly during the whole term of life? So did God constantly reside in this glorious angel. Does the soul influence the body to its chief human actions? So did God influence this angel. Is the body the constant and immediate instrument of the soul, whereby it speaks and acts and conveys its mind to men? Such was this angel to the great God, who dwelt in him. Is the body obedient to the volitions of the indwelling soul? Much more is this angel to the indwelling God. Is the soul immediately conscious of many of the motions of the body? Much more is God immediately conscious of every motion, action and occurrence that relates to this angel. Are the properties and actions of the body sometimes attributed to the soul, and the properties and actions of the soul sometimes to the body, in the common language of men? So in the language of scripture the names, titles and properties of the great God are attributed to this angel; the appearances, speeches, voice, words, motions and actions of this angel are attributed to God. And if man upon these accounts be called a complex person, made up of soul and body, for the same reason we may suppose that the great God and this angel of his presence make up a complex person also; and this is properly called a personal union.

Objection VI. If it was *Christ* himself who spoke to *Moses*, *Deut.* xviii. 18. when "the Lord said, I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee;" If it was *Christ* himself said in *Exod.* xxiii. 20. "Behold, I send an angel before thee, beware of him, provoke him not, for my name is in him;" If it was *Christ* who spake to the prophets, "Behold, saith the Lord, I will raise up to *David* a righteous branch," *Jer.* xxiii. 5. And if *Christ* be this very prophet, this angel, this righteous branch, then it must be interpreted that *Christ* says, "I will raise up myself a prophet, &c. I will send myself an angel before thee, and I will raise up



up myself a righteous branch to *David* ;” which seem to be strange sort of interpretations.

Answer. If we consider that throughout all the old testament our blessed Saviour is supposed to be a complex person, and if we conceive of him as the soul of *Christ* in it's angelic state united to and inhabited by God himself, it is very easy to suppose this glorious person speaking in the name of the indwelling godhead, which is his superior nature, and foretelling futurities concerning himself in his inferior nature, and declaring what he should be in his inferior œconomical characters. Or we may suppose the angel in whom godhead dwelt, speaks in the name of God the Father, as the great fountain and author of all ; and yet this angel may foretel his own future appearances and transactions as an angel, as a prophet, as a branch of righteousness, as the servant and messenger of God the Father, and the appointed Mediator between God and man. Here is no manner of darkness nor difficulty in these ideas, nor has this interpretation any thing strange or harsh in it.

Objection VII. If this angel who appeared and assumed divine names and titles, were so really and intimately united to the true God, as to become one complex person, and all this were so plain and so evident as you represent it to be, then the *jewish* church could not but have as clear a knowledge as we have of this doctrine, that the two persons, viz. the Father and the Son, were the one true God ; and then the knowledge of this article is not the peculiar privilege of christians.

Answer. I am persuaded that some of the ancient *jews* and the patriarchs did believe that this was an angel in whom the great God or *Jehovah* resided or inhabited in a peculiar manner ; particularly when *Jacob* said, I have seen God, when *Moses* was afraid to look upon God, when *Abraham* spoke to him as to the great God ; but there were several things wherein their light was deficient and very imperfect if compared with ours.

1. The patriarchs might not know that this angel in whom God dwelt, and who was thus united to God, was *Christ* the Son of God, or the *Messiah*, the great Mediator between God and men appointed for the reconciliation and salvation of the world.

2. They might not know whether this union between God and the angel was constant or only occasional. Though they might suppose him to be an angel of superior rank, by his being made such a glorious medium of God's conversing and transacting with men at special seasons, yet they might not know that he was assumed into so constant and everlasting an union, and withal so very near and so very intimate that this complex person should be called God over all blessed for evermore, and that there should be a constant and mutual communication of properties between the one and the other in speaking or writing of them.

3. The *jews* in the days of the prophets did not know half so many texts of the old testament to belong to *Christ* as the apostles have taught us.

4. I might add also, that the *jewish* writers in later ages by degrees came to obtain a confused notion of God's transacting his affairs with men, and manifesting himself to them, by his Logos or Word, which sometimes they interpreted as his own essential Wisdom, or the idea, scheme, degree of all things that was in God ; and sometimes they made it to signify a very glorious angel, the first-born of every creature, in whom God dwelt, and by whom he transacted his affairs with the children of men. And though they had not the same clear and distinct ideas of these matters as the new testament reveals to us concerning the union of God and man in one complex person, yet  
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in their writings there appear many hints and intimations of this kind, as I have proved in a dissertation on the Logos.

And indeed I know not any thing besides this supposition that can give so fair and reasonable an account how it comes to pass that both the gentiles and *jews*, in the first age of christianity, did not raise perpetual objections against the doctrine of *Christ's* deity, that is, his being sometimes represented under the characters and names of the true God; and why they did not always quarrel with the apostles for citing such texts of scripture as plainly refer to the true and essential God in the old testament, and apply them to *Christ* in the new testament; as in *Rom. x. Eph. iv. Heb. i. &c.* But this supposition gives a very fair solution of it, viz. that as God appeared and resided in an angel heretofore, so *Christ* or the *Messiah* was understood to be a glorious person or spirit incarnate, who was especially inhabited by God, or in whom godhead dwelt in a peculiar manner, and in and by whom God was to reveal himself to men in the latter times\*.

As it was by degrees that the apostles preached up the peculiar presence and union of God with the man *Jesus Christ*, and afterward came to call *Christ* God more freely, and applied divine characters and descriptions to him, cited out of the old testament; so it was by degrees that the *jews* and gentiles received the doctrine of a peculiar union of godhead to the man *Jesus*, learned the idea of such a complex person as God with us, as God manifest in the flesh, and that he who was of the seed of *David* after the flesh was also God over all blessed for ever.

\* It may not be improper in this place to repeat the paraphrase of one of the targumists, viz. *Jonathan Ben Uzziel* on *Gen. iv. 1.* where *Eve* said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord, אִישׁ אֶת יְהוָה" that is, a man the Lord: By which words our mother *Eve*, in the opinion of many commentators, expressed an apprehension that she had brought forth him who was the Man-God, the promised seed, who should break the serpent's head. The words of the targum are, "And *Adam* knew his wife, and she conceived and bore *Cain*, and said, I have obtained a man the angel of the Lord." See doctor *Owen* on the *Hebrews*, Vol. I. page 89. So that it was supposed from the beginning of the world that the *Messiah* was to be a man and an angel, who might be called God or the Lord, because of God's peculiar indwelling in him.

## APPENDIX



## A P P E N D I X

## To the FIRST DISCOURSE.

*Some observations on the texts of the old testament applied to Christ by the christian fathers, and by the jews as well as by the sacred writers.*

Observation I. **W** Heresoever the writers of the new testament find the almighty God, the Creator and Lord of all, the only true God, *Jehovah*, the God of *Israel*, represented in the old testament as appearing to men in a visible manner; or wheresoever they find him described as bringing salvation to the *jews*, but especially to the gentiles, they seem to make no scruple to cite any of those texts upon a proper occasion; and apply them to our Lord *Jesus Christ*. Now it is worth our enquiry whether these citations will not prove *Christ* to be God incarnate, to be this *Jehovah*, this God appearing amongst men, and as the Saviour of mankind bringing the gentiles into his church. Let us take notice of a few instances.

*Psal. lxxviii.* 7, 8. "God went forth before his people, and marched through the wilderness, dwelling in the pillar of cloud and fire; the earth shook, the heavens dropped at the presence of God. *Sinai* itself was moved at the presence of the God of *Israel*, when he came down upon mount *Sinai* in fire, verses 16, 17. God hath desired to dwell in *Zion*, yea, the Lord, *Jehovah*, will dwell in it for ever: The Lord is there even as in *Sinai* in the holy place, that is, in the visible glory upon the mercy-seat, even as in fire upon mount *Sinai*, verse 18. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that is, probably for the heathen world, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them." This is plainly applied to *Christ*, *Ephes.* iv. "When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now he that ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" which most evidently intends our blessed Saviour.

*Psal. xcvi.* 1. "The Lord, *Jehovah*, reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of isles be glad." This evidently declares the Lord coming to bring salvation to the gentiles, and he is called, verse 5. "the Lord of the whole earth;" whereas, *Psal. xcix.* 1, 2. "The Lord who is great in *Zion*, and who sits between the cherubims,"

bims," is considered as the God of the *jews*: then it is said, "the Lord reigneth; let the people or gentile nations tremble." Well then, since the *xcviii*th *Psal*m speaks of *Jehovah* as bringing salvation to the gentiles, it follows, verse 7. "Confounded be they that serve graven images; worship him all ye gods." The idolatry of the gentiles is now to be abolished, and even the angels of God as well as the princes of the earth, who are called gods, are required to worship him. This is directly applied to *Christ*, and interpreted of him, *Heb.* i. 6. "Let all the angels of God worship him." *Christ* is this *Jehovah*.

*Psal.* ciii. 15. "The heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory;" and probably the recalling the *jews* follows, verse 16. "When the Lord shall build up *Zion*, he will appear in his glory: The Lord shall declare his name in *Zion*, and his praise in *Jerusalem*, when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, that is, of the gentiles, to serve the Lord. Verse 25. Of old thou hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou art the same, &c." This is expressly attributed to *Christ*, *Heb.* i. 10, 11. The apostle introduces it to prove his dignity above angels, and shews that he is the *Jehovah*, that God who created the heavens and the earth, &c.

*Isa.* vi. 1. "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple, &c. Verse 5. Mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts, &c." which is a narrative of some visible appearance of God. And the holy evangelist interprets it concerning our Saviour, *John* xii. 41. "These things said *Isai*as, when he saw his glory and spake of him." Here is the great God appearing in a visible manner, and *Christ* is that God or Lord of hosts.

*Isai.* xxxv. 1, 2, &c. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. The glory of *Lebanon* shall be given to it, the excellency of *Carmel* and *Sharon*;" that is, the gentiles shall have the glory of being a church of God, even as the land of *Israel* had been: "They shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. Your God will come with a recompence, he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert, &c." Compare this with *Isai.* xxxii. 1, 2, 3. "A king shall reign in righteousness, a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest, and the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken, &c." The same things are here foretold concerning the appearance of God, and the appearance of a man, which plainly refer to the miracles which were wrought when *Christ* appeared, who is God and man, or God dwelling in man, and it is applied to *Christ*'s appearance on earth by himself, *Matth.* xii. 4, 5. where he sends word to *John*, that these evidences attended him, which are the characters of the *Messiah*, and which were foretold. Now there is no place in the old testament more plainly foretels them than the words I have cited.

*Isai.* xl. 3. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert an high way for our God; the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." Here the glory of God is foretold to become visible, and that all flesh shall see his glory. This is plainly applied to *Christ*, where *John* the baptist is said to "prepare the way for the Lord," *Matth.* iii. 3. *Mark* i. 3. *Luke* i. 16, 17. even  
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for the Lord, *Jehovah*, that all flesh might see him, that is, *jews* and *gentiles* who include all nations.

I might proceed to the 9th, 10th and 11th verses. "Say to the cities of *Judab*, Behold your God: Behold, the Lord God will come—and his reward is with him, and his work before him; he shall feed his flock like a shepherd:" Which words seem to refer to *Christ* who is *Immanuel*, God with us, whom the cities of *Judab* did behold, even God manifest in the flesh, and becoming visible, who assumes the character of a shepherd, *John* x. and of whom it is said, "Behold, he comes, and his reward is with him," *Rev.* xxii. 12. and who in the next verse calls himself the alpha and omega, &c.

*Isai.* xlv. 21, 22, &c. "There is no God else besides me, a just God and a Saviour: Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else." Here God is evidently represented as a Saviour of the gentiles: "Unto me shall every knee bow, and every tongue shall swear: Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength, in the Lord shall all the seed of *Israel* be justified and shall glory." Now, that this belongs to *Christ* eminently appears, 1. because this prophecy of *Christ* as *Jehovah* our righteousness, is repeated twice by the prophet *Jeremiah*, chapter xxiii. 6. and xxxiii. 16. And the doctrine of *Christ* as our righteousness is frequently taught us in the new testament, particularly *1 Cor.* i. 30, 31. "*Christ* is made unto us righteousness;" and, 2. it may be remarked that the same inference is made, viz. "that according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord;" and, 3. this same prophecy of the exaltation of *Christ* that every knee should bow to him, is expressly explained, *Rom.* xiv. 9, 10, 11. and *Philip* ii. 9. and is applied to *Christ* in both places.

If it should be objected here, that *Christ* is represented in both those epistles as exalted to this honour by the Father, upon the account of his sufferings, and therefore it cannot belong to godhead, whose honour is originally and eternally due to the very nature of God: It is granted that the human nature is thus exalted by the Father, as a reward of his death, in *Phil.* ii. and in *Rom.* xiv. it is also granted, that "*Christ* died, and rose and revived, that he might be Lord of the dead and the living." But since the same words are used in both places; and this prophecy of *Isaiab* is expressly cited, *Rom.* xiv. 11. and applied to *Christ*, it may primarily signify the eternal glory of the godhead, as united to the man *Jesus*, or God manifest in the flesh; and in a secondary sense, it may imply all the share of these honours that the human nature of *Christ* which suffered and died, is capable of receiving, by it's personal union with the divine, which honour can belong to no other creature, because no other being is thus united to God, or one with God.

*Joel* ii. 28, 32. "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, &c. and whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, *Jehovah*, shall be delivered; for in mount *Zion* and in *Jerusalem* shall be deliverance, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call;" which probably means the gentile church. Now this text is expressly interpreted concerning *Christ*, *Rom.* x. 12, 13. "There is no difference between the *jew* and the *greek*; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him; for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," that is, upon the name of *Christ*; for this is the very scope of the place, and this the next verse proves: "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe on him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" All which plainly refers to our blessed Saviour.

Obser-

Observation II. The primitive fathers of the christian church, even the earliest writers, such as *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, &c. copy after the sacred writers of the new testament; and wheresoever they find the great God, the creator of all, *Jehovah*, the Lord God of *Israel*, represented, as becoming a Saviour to men, and especially where he is described as becoming visible, either in the ancient dispensations, or under the new testament, or in the day of judgment, they make no scruple at all to apply these texts to our Lord *Jesus Christ*. Instances of this kind are very numerous in the writings even of the three first centuries. *Justin Martyr* affords us several citations to this purpose; and while I have been reading him as well as *Irenæus*, I have wondered how it could be denied, that either of them professed *Christ* to be true God. *Justin* interprets the following scriptures with reference to *Christ*.

*Gen.* xviii. 1. "And the Lord appeared to *Abraham* in the plains of *Mamre*." *Gen.* xix. 27. "And *Abraham* stood before the Lord." *Gen.* xxviii. 13. "And behold the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of *Abraham* thy father, and the God of *Isaac*." *Gen.* xxxi. 13. "I am the God of *Bethel*, where thou appointedst the pillar." *Exod.* iii. 4, 8. "God called to him out of the midst of the bush,—he said, I am the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob*." *Exod.* vi. 30. "I appeared unto *Abraham*, unto *Isaac*, and unto *Jacob*, by the name of GOD ALMIGHTY, but by my name *JEHOVAH* was I not known to them." *Psal.* xxiv. 8, 10. "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle: The Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory." In this *Psal*m God is described as residing in the ark, and ascending to *Zion*, to dwell there in a visible manner in the bright cloud. The same may be said concerning *Psal.* xlvii. 5. "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." All are interpreted concerning *Christ* by *Justin Martyr*.

*Irenæus* explains many of the same texts in the same manner, and several others, viz. *Gen.* iii. 9. "The Lord came to *Adam* in the evening and called him, and said, Where art thou? Because in the latter days this very same Word of God comes to call man." *Psal.* l. 1. "The mighty God, even the Lord hath spoken," whom *Irenæus* calls, the God of gods. What God is this? Even he of whom he said, "God shall come visibly, even our God, and will not be silent. This is the Son." *Psal.* lxxvi. 1. "In *Judah* God is known, and his name is great in *Israel*." *Isa.* lxxv. 1. "I was made manifest to them that asked not after me," that is, to the gentiles. *Isa.* xxxv. 4. "Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence, he will come and save you." All these places *Irenæus* applies to *Jesus Christ*, and a great many others may be found in several of the primitive fathers, some of which are cited by the learned doctor *Waterland* in his first defence of the queries concerning the divinity of *Christ*, query ii. page 28, &c. and in Mr. *Alexander's* essay on *Irenæus*, chapter vi.

Objection I. One pretence of the *arians* against these writers belief of the divinity of *Christ*, as expressed in these texts, is, that they suppose *Christ* in these places is introduced only in the person of the Father, and as his messenger and deputy.

Answer. This pretence doctor *Waterland* has sufficiently obviated in the following pages, 33—46. wherein he shews by some express citations that the fathers spake of *Christ* in his own person, though in some places he may be described as the Father's messenger, and as coming in his name.



Objection II. It may be objected further, that however this may be the most plain and most obvious meaning of the primitive fathers in some places of their writings, viz. That *Christ* or the Logos is *Jehovah* or the true God, the God of *Israel*, yet in other places they plainly describe the Logos as a derived being, and as having many characters of inferiority, both as to his original, his existence, and his actions; and therefore when those divine titles are ascribed to *Christ*, they must be interpreted into some inferior or diminutive sense, that they be reconciled to the inferior characters given to that Logos, and so may be attributed to an inferior being.

Answer I. Some great divines have attempted to reconcile these inferior characters of the Logos to true and eternal godhead, by supposing that both a real derivation and some natural as well as oeconomical inferiority may be allowed to belong to the Logos, even in his divine nature. But this I leave to those who can defend the doctrine of a derived God.

Answer II. These inferior characters of the Logos may belong to the human soul of *Christ*, supposing it to be the first of all creatures, and from it's earliest existence to be intimately united to eternal godhead: And thus the supreme and divine character may belong to this complex person *Jesus Christ*, who is both God and a creature; though I cannot say many of the fathers did profess this notion.

Answer III. Whether the different expressions of the fathers in different parts of their writings can be reconciled or no, yet this is plain, that in some places they do in the most evident and obvious manner interpret and ascribe the supreme scriptural titles of *Jehovah*, Lord of hosts, the God of *Israel*, &c. to the Logos, or to the Son of God; and this is all that I insist upon here.

Observation III. The ancient *jews* in their interpretations of scripture practised the same thing as the apostles and the christian fathers; and where God is represented in a visible manner conversing with men, or coming to save them, they make no manner of scruple to ascribe these expressions of scripture to the Word of God, the Memra or Logos, and sometimes to the *Messiah*. This may be seen abundantly in several parts of doctor *Allix's* judgment of the *jewish* church against the unitarians, chapters xiii, xiv, xv, xviii, xix, xxvi. And in doctor *Owen's* exercitations on the epistle to the *hebrews*, numbers ix, x, xi.

Now amongst the ancient *jews* the Memra or Logos, that is, the Word of God, often signifies God himself, or something in and of God, some divine principle belonging to the essence of God, whereby he transacts his affairs with creatures; and it also signifies sometimes in their writings a very glorious archangel, or a spirit superior to all angels, in whom God put his name, and in whom the true God resided in a peculiar manner, as in his house or his habitation, which they called the *shekinah*. This I have shewn at large in my dissertation concerning the Logos; and I have there made it appear how both those ideas may be united in one *Messiah*. See page 553—594.

But however that matter stands, yet thus much is evident, that those scriptures where God is represented in a visible manner, or where he is represented eminently as a Saviour, or bringing salvation to his people both *jews* and gentiles, have been interpreted concerning *Christ* or the Word by the ancient *jewish* church, by the apostles, and by the primitive christian writers; whence I think we may infer these three things.

1. That *Jesus Christ* in the sense of all these writers has true and eternal godhead belonging to him, as part of his complex person; for the ancient *jews* and the primitive christians,

christians, and especially the sacred writers, had such an awful sense of the transcendent excellency of the great God, and of his jealousy for his own name and honour, that they would not dare to attribute his most sublime titles, characters and glories to a mere creature, or to any thing which had not true godhead.

2. That the godhead of *Christ* is the very same with the godhead of the Father; and that his divine nature is the same infinite and eternal being, the same *Jehovah* or God of *Israel* to whom all the highest titles in the old testament are ascribed, as *Christ* himself says, *John* x. "I and my Father are one." The Father and Son are not two infinite spirits, or two gods, but one and the same God.

3. That the denying of these glorious and sublime titles of *Jehovah*, the Lord God, the God of *Israel*, &c. to belong to *Christ*, or the interpreting of them into such a diminished and inferior sense as may belong to a mere inferior spirit, a contingent or created being, without any such personal union to godhead, seems to run contrary to the most plain and obvious sense and meaning both of the sacred writers, of the ancient *jews*, and the primitive christians.



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## DISCOURSE II.

### The GLORY of CHRIST as GOD-MAN displayed,

By an INQUIRY into the extensive powers of his human  
nature in it's present glorified state.

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#### SECTION I.

#### INTRODUCTION.

**G**OD united to man, and dwelling in a human body, is one of the mysterious glories of our religion. It was so without controversy amongst the primitive christians, as St. *Paul* acquaints young *Timothy* the evangelist, 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." The union of the divine and human natures in the compleat person of *Christ* the Mediator, is one of those sublime wonders which could never have been found out by the reason of man, and which were revealed slowly to the church in successive ages. There were types and emblems and glimpses of it in ancient days; but the fuller discovery of this mystery is reserved to adorn the new testament. In these latter days we have a most evident and certain revelation made to us, that *Christ Jesus* the Mediator, who was "of the seed of *David* according to the flesh, is God over all, blessed for ever." *Rom.* ix. 5.

Yet the glories that spring from this sacred union are too bright to be all unveiled before us in the present state of infirmity. They are too vast and extensive to be received by the narrowness of our apprehensions, while our souls are confined in flesh and blood. The rays of godhead once broke through the human nature of *Christ* on the mount of transfiguration, but the disciples were not able to bear them. It is by  
degrees

degrees we must gain acquaintance with this divine person; and as his divinity is all light and splendor, so his human nature, which is a creature, has doubtless in itself many peculiar excellencies and prerogatives, that it might be fit to be so nearly allied to godhead with decency and honour. And doubtless also it has acquired most astonishing advancement both in power, capacity and glory by this sacred and admirable alliance, as well as by its present exaltation in heaven.

The most necessary and important doctrines of the gospel concerning the person of *Christ* are plainly written in the Word of God, that the weakest christians may read and learn them, and be saved. These have been known and acknowledged by all true christians in all ages of the church. But there are others also of some importance, which are contained in scripture, and yet may not have been universally received among christians. Some of these perhaps have not been observed in our reading the bible hitherto, because our education has given us no hint of them; these may become the subjects of our delightful search and profitable enquiry, when we meet with the first notices of them in the world. It is our duty to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord *Jesus Christ*," 2 *Peter* iii. 18. and to seek what further acquaintance with him we may gain by an honest and impartial search into the Word of God. This will carry several advantages with it, viz.

1. This will be for the exaltation of *Christ* himself; for we shall pay him more just honour in every respect, when we know more of him, and are better acquainted with the various excellencies of his sacred person.

2. This will tend to the illustration of the gospel, and the confirmation of our faith; for the whole scheme of christianity, and particularly all that doctrine that relates to the person of *Christ*, is so harmoniously connected, that when we gain further light into any one part of it, it sheds some degrees of divine brightness over all the rest.

3. This will better furnish us with answers to the adversaries of our religion; for the more we know, the better we can defend our knowledge, support our profession, and vindicate the name and honour of our blessed Saviour.

4. This will render the Word of God itself more glorious, both in our own esteem, and in the eyes of the world, when we see the darker and more perplexed passages of it unfolded, when we find a way to solve those difficulties which have often puzzled us and our forefathers, and when we remove those incumbrances which have given our adversaries a handle to assault our faith, and to depreciate the Word of God as a volume of obscure and inconsistent things.

Our Lord *Jesus Christ* considered in his compleat person, has the divine nature joined to the human; this has been proved with abundant evidence in ancient and modern writings. Now as the divine nature is all over glorious, so there are some glories which are peculiar and proper to his human nature; some of these are native honours and excellencies that belong to the human soul and body of *Christ*, and there are other surprizing powers and dignities which are derived to the man *Jesus*, partly by his exaltation to the throne in heaven, and partly by virtue of his union with the godhead, as was hinted before.

In many instances it must be confessed, it is difficult, if not impossible, for us to say exactly how far the human nature is the immediate subject of some sublime honours and actions, and how far they must be ascribed to the indwelling deity; to find the precise limits of the agencies or honours of the two natures in *Christ* in every respect, is a mystery too deep for our present penetration. Yet since the scripture has abundantly



abundantly manifested the exaltation of the man *Jesus* to the right-hand of God, to enjoy unconceivable degrees of power, authority and splendor, it is proper for us to do so much honour to the man whom God the Father delights to honour, as to read and understand as far as we can the peculiar glories of his special advancement.

It has been a common practice with us, because we know that *Jesus Christ* is true God, and that his human nature is united to the divine, therefore whensoever we read any glorious and sublime attributions to our blessed redeemer in scripture, we content ourselves immediately to refer them all to his divine nature, as being all-sufficient to support them; not considering that we may perhaps by this means swallow up and bury some of the most illustrious excellencies and honours of the man *Christ Jesus*, nor suffer his human nature to receive that due share of glory and dignity to which the Father has advanced it. We are sometimes afraid to exalt the man whom the Father has exalted, lest we should be thought to derogate from his godhead. We are afraid to read the human name of *Jesus* in some scriptures which highly exalt the Son of God, lest we should be thought to weaken the force of any of those texts which are usually amassed together to prove the deity of *Christ*, or lest we should withhold any of them from this service.

I grant that the sacred doctrine of the divinity united to the human nature in *Christ* ought to be supported by all just expositions of scripture. It is an article that we cannot part with out of our religion, without shaking the foundation. But *Jesus Christ*, our Lord and our God, never requires us to strain one line of his word, or turn it aside from the natural sense, in order to support his deity. There are many passages both of the old and new testament that declare and confirm this great article; and many of those scriptures also wherein the human nature of *Christ* is jointly honoured, do yet carry in them a plain proof of the united godhead. But since there are some scriptures which in their most natural and obvious sense speak chiefly of the honours of his godhead, and others chiefly describe the exaltation of his humanity, let us do so much justice to our blessed Saviour as to read the distinct honours of both his natures in those very places of scripture where he has written them, that so we may pay him the full glory due to his sacred and complex person as God-man.

Nor can it any way lessen the glory of our blessed Mediator, nor derogate from the honour of his divine nature, to shew what capacious powers and sublime dignities are derived to the man *Jesus* either by his present exalted state, or by the influence of that godhead which has assumed him into so near an union, since we still secure to the blessed godhead all it's own eminence and infinite superiority to the man.

## S E C T I O N. II.

*Scriptural proofs of the exaltation of the human nature of Christ, and the extensive capacities and powers of his soul in his glorified state.*

**T**HAT the great and blessed God condescended to assume any human soul and body into a personal union with himself, was a matter of free and sovereign favour; and that he should chuse this one human spirit, and this body which was born of the virgin *Mary*, to be the subjects of this privilege, was the effect of the same goodness and the same sovereignty; "God spake in vision to his holy one, and said,  
I have

I have exalted one chosen out of the people," *Psal. lxxxix. 19.* It is a favour at first altogether unmerited, and which the man *Jesus* could not claim. "It pleased the Father that in him all the fulness of the godhead should dwell bodily," *Col. i. 19.* and *ii. 9.* It was a matter of divine good pleasure that God should dwell in that particular spirit, and be manifest in that particular flesh and blood which was born at *Bethlehem.*

Thence it will follow, that the influences and privileges derived from this union are limited by the will and pleasure of God; and the honours and powers which accrue to the human nature on this account are suspended or bestowed, increased and diminished, according to the wise counsels and determinations of the divine will.

It seems to be one of the sacred laws of this ineffable union, that the man *Jesus* should have ideas and influences, knowledge and power, communicated to him by the indwelling godhead, in such measures and at such successive seasons as he stood in need of them, for his several offices and operations in the divine oeconomy. The human soul of *Christ* cannot receive and retain all possible ideas constantly and simultaneously: This would be to suppose the man really endowed with the properties of godhead. But as fast as the indwelling godhead sees it proper to furnish him with new and larger ideas and powers, so fast is he made capable of receiving and exerting them, both in his state of humiliation and exaltation.

This will appear if we consider that *Christ* was God-man in the days of his humiliation: He was *Emmanuel* or God with us: *Matth. i. 23.* He was God manifest in the flesh: *1 Tim. iii. 16.* He was that Word who was God, made flesh: *John i. 1, 14.* And our divines very justly affirm, it was the same godhead which is in the Father that dwelt in *Christ*: "I am in the Father, says our Lord, and the Father in me," *John xiv. 10.* "I and the Father are one," *John x. 30.* Yet while he lived upon earth, this divine union did not exert it's influences to the utmost, neither as to knowledge or power or authority; for the child *Jesus* grew in wisdom as well as stature, *Luke ii. 52.* and the day of judgment which was known to the Father was unknown to the Son at that time, *Mark xiii. 32.* "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, neither the Son, but the Father." His knowledge was imperfect; and his authority on earth, before his death, appeared rather the authority of a prophet than a king: In his younger years he was subject to the commands of his parents, *Luke ii. 51.* And when he appeared in the world, it was as a man, sent from God, to reveal his will and to obey or fulfil it. He declared he was no king on earth, that is, a temporal king, for "his kingdom was not of this world," *John xviii. 36.* He paid tribute to *Cæsar*; he would not be the "divider of an inheritance among contending brethren;" *Luke xii. 13, 14.* "He had not where to lay his head," *ix. 58.* The man *Jesus* here on earth lived among men, and had not complete knowledge, nor could he have complete power.

It pleased the Father, and it was agreed in the covenant of redemption, that the man *Jesus* should arrive at his exaltation by degrees: It was agreed that he should practice the most profound instances of humility and submission to God, as well as the most astonishing act of pity and charity toward men, in becoming a sacrifice for their sins and dying upon the cross, before he was to receive his promised honours. The Father thought it proper to bestow the most sublime advancement upon him as a reward of his sufferings; and to suspend his rich reward till his work was done, that he might at once display his own grace, his equity and his truth in the glorification



of the human nature of his Son *Jesus*, and that he might be a more proper pattern for all his followers. This doctrine runs through many pages in the old testament and in the new.

But when *Christ* had finished his work, he then prayed for the promised glory. *John* xvii. 1—5. "Father, glorify thy Son; — I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." And when he ascended to heaven, and was seated at the right hand of God, then he that was of the seed of *David* more eminently appeared to be "God over all, blessed for ever," as *Rom.* ix. 4, 5. Then the influences of this sacred union were exerted in an high degree, and honours and dignities were conferred upon him in abundance, with intellectual and operative powers suited to this advancement. "God manifest in the flesh was received up to heaven in glory," *1 Tim.* iii. 16. And there the human nature lives and acts, shines, and reigns, in a manner becoming it's high privilege of union to godhead.

In order to pursue my present design I shall do these two things;

First, I shall endeavour to prove from scripture that it is the human nature of *Christ* that was peculiarly exalted after his sufferings; and then

Secondly, Set before you a more particular detail of the instances wherein this exaltation consists.

First, The reasons to prove that it is the man *Christ* who is exalted by God the Father, are such as these.

1. *St. Peter* gives us an account in his first sermon, *Acts* ii. 33. of *Christ* exalted by the right-hand of God. If we inquire more particularly of the person who is thus exalted, the context assures us, it is "*Jesus of Nazareth*, a man approved of God, verse 22. It is that very man of the seed of *David*, according to the flesh, who was appointed to sit on his throne, verse 30. It was the man that was taken and crucified and slain, verse 23. The man whom God raised from the dead, verse 32. who was thus exalted by the right hand of God," verse 33.

2. It is a real exaltation of *Christ* by the will or good pleasure of God, which is expressed in many scriptures, and not merely a manifestative exaltation. It is an advancement to new degrees of knowledge, to a real increase of capacity, to new powers and advantages, which he had not on earth, as well as to new dignities. But the divine nature is eternal and self-sufficient, full in itself of all real and possible powers and dignities, nor can it receive any new powers, nor can it have any real advancement. Godhead cannot be any otherwise exalted, than by having it's own original and eternal powers or the exercise of them manifested or discovered to his creatures; it must be therefore a creature, even the man *Jesus*, who receives this real advancement.

3. It is the human nature of *Christ* which is properly exalted, because it is the man who is expressly called the Mediator in scripture, whereas he is never expressly called Mediator as God. *1 Tim.* ii. 5. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man *Christ Jesus*." Now it was for the most part mediatorial honours and powers which he received at his exaltation; and partly with this design, that he might better fulfil the remaining part of his work as Mediator, that the man *Jesus* might reign over the nations and judge this world. *Acts* xi. 36, 38. *Acts* xvii. 31.

4. His exaltation is represented as the reward of his sufferings and labours in many places of scripture. *Isai.* liii. 10, 12. "Therefore shall he divide the spoil with the great, because he poured out his soul unto death." *Phil.* ii. 8. "He humbled himself

self and became obedient to death, wherefore God hath also highly exalted him." *Rev. v. 9.* "Thou art worthy to take the book, &c. for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us." Now it is not so proper to say, the divine nature in *Christ*, or his indwelling godhead, is rewarded, because his human nature laboured and suffered and died. The godhead in *Christ* is properly incapable of receiving any rewards from God the Father, for it is one and the same godhead or divine nature in both persons; nor indeed can a God be properly rewarded at all.

This argument will be further enforced, if we consider, that his exaltation after his labours and sufferings, is represented and proposed to us as a pledge and pattern of our exaltation after we have laboured and suffered, on purpose to encourage us in our labours and sufferings. Now this must be the exaltation of his human nature or the man *Jesus*, who did both labour and suffer as well as we.

I will say no more in this place, because this doctrine will appear more evident all the way as we proceed: Yet if we had nothing further to say for it, I think upon the whole we might venture to conclude, that as the humiliation of *Christ* the Mediator has a more peculiar respect to his human nature, so it is the human nature is more especially exalted by the Father, but still considered in union with the divine, and under the character of Mediator.

My second general head of discourse is to give some special instances wherein the exaltation of *Christ* in his human nature consists; and this appears eminently in the following particulars.

I. The man *Christ Jesus* united to the divine nature is admitted to the knowledge of many of the decrees and the secret counsels of God. He that knew not the day of judgment here on earth, has now the scene of all futurities spread open before him; and he communicated them in visions and figures to *John* the apostle, that he might publish them to the churches. The book of the *Revelation* begins with this assertion, that "God gave to *Jesus Christ* the knowledge of things, that must shortly come to pass:" And in *Rev. v. 5.* "The lion of the tribe of *Judah* hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. Verse 6. The lamb, as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne, and opened the seals thereof." Here is the human nature of *Christ*, the lamb, represented with unknown powers, viz. "seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God:" The seven horns might signify perfect might, and the seven eyes perfect knowledge; and by virtue of his union to the divine nature this may include his power to send the Spirit of God, or to give forth his gifts or graces. He opens the book or divine counsels, by which the church and the nations are to be governed to the end of the world.

Now the divine nature of *Christ* knew all that was written in this book while it was sealed; but after the sufferings of *Christ* on earth, his human nature was admitted to this privilege; and having power given him to rule the world, it was necessary he should know those counsels and decrees of the Father by which the world is to be ruled.

Observe also that he is made and declared "worthy to take this book and to open the seals of it, because he was slain and has redeemed his saints to God by his blood," verse 9. Surely it was not the godhead, but the man *Jesus* who was slain; and it is the man, not the godhead, who is become worthy on this account to read this book of divine counsels. "This is that revelation which God gave unto *Jesus Christ*, to



shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant *John*," *Rev. i. 1.*

II. The human nature of *Christ* as united to God is exalted to the government of heaven and earth. *Matth. xxviii. 18.* *Jesus* just before his ascension spake unto them, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And *Ephes. i. 20.* *St. Paul* tells us it was God's "mighty power, which he wrought in *Christ* when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality and power, might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the world to come, and hath put all things under his feet."

I know this sort of expression in scripture is wont to be applied expressly to the character of *Christ* as Mediator; for it is usually said, Though his divine nature absolutely considered had all this dominion before, yet as Mediator it was now given to him.

But let us consider these three things.

1. Since the human nature of *Christ* at least must be allowed in some sense to complete the person of the Mediator, and it is his human nature that is thus raised from the dead by the mighty power of God, and set at the right hand of God in heavenly places, it is but reasonable to conceive that the human nature receives this exaltation, this power and dominion over all things, though I grant it must be considered in union with the divine: But if we do not suppose it to be the human nature which is thus dignified and endued with authority, then we shall be forced to interpret this text thus, viz. that God raised his human nature from the dead, and set his human nature at his own right hand, that is, on high above the clouds: But has put all things under the feet of his divine nature considered as Mediator; which seems to be but a shifting and evasive exposition, if the words will admit a sense that is plainer and easier: And no man who reads it with an unbiassed mind would put this strained interpretation upon it.

2. Of what use is the frequent declaration of this power and government conferred upon *Christ* after his ascension, if it be not conferred on his human nature, and if his human nature does not exercise it? The divine nature of *Christ* had this power, and exercised this government before: As God he always did, and always will govern the world, though there had not been a word spoken in scripture of any exaltation of *Christ* to this government: And since godhead is united to the man *Jesus*, godhead in this united state would continue to govern the world as before, and that even during all the humiliation of *Christ*: What alteration then does arise from this declared exaltation of *Christ*, after his labours and sufferings?

And besides,

3. What new advantage, what benefit, what gift or reward can it be to the human nature of *Christ*, that his divine nature should be made governor of all things? Or that the divine nature should exert that authority, dominion and power which it had inherent in itself, originally, necessarily and without any gift? This government of *Christ* is frequently represented as a gift and a reward, and therefore must belong eminently to the inferior nature, which alone is capable of rewards and gifts from God.

The same argument may be drawn from *Rom. xiv. 9.* "To this end *Christ* both died and rose and revived, or lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living." His death and resurrection belong to his human nature; he died as man, he rose as man, that he might as man rule over the dead and the living;

living; for it is hardly to be supposed that St. *Paul* could mean, "He died and rose as man, that his godhead might obtain this dominion, when his godhead had this dominion eternal and unalienable in itself, and needed no such new title to dominion:" For his coming into flesh could never divest him of it, nor could his human sufferings repurchase such a divine claim and power if he had divested himself.

Yet here I would give notice once for all, that I do not exclude this sort of scriptures from an oeconomical sense: I mean thus, they may have a respect to *Christ* in his complete person as God-man, and as Mediator; or as a man united to godhead, and they may and must signify his exaltation in his mediatorial character to these honours and authorities; without the indwelling godhead several of them seem to be too sublime for a man: But still the most natural, obvious, and primary meaning of them, refers to that human nature, which alone can be the proper subject of real abasement and advancement, which alone could really suffer, and which alone could receive real exaltation; for the divine nature in itself is utterly incapable of either. It is the man who is exalted, even the man *Jesus* who is called the Mediator, but it is the man who is one with God. He obeyed and suffered and died as man, but united to God: He rose and was exalted as man, but still united to God. I beg pardon if I have dwelt too long on this point, or repeated any thing which I had said before. The doctrine itself seems to require it of me, that if possible I might leave no scruple on the minds of pious readers who are honestly searching out the truth, and would secure the honours of their blessed redeemer.

It may be enquired here, "What acts can the man *Jesus* put forth in his human nature toward the government of heaven and earth?"

I answer, As he is now let into the counsels and decrees of God, and by his immediate union with the divine nature he now receives perpetual notice of all the affairs in the upper and lower worlds, so he can give his orders to the millions of attending angels to execute works of judgment and mercy; they are all ministering spirits to him. He can manage the affairs of providence by angels as his instruments for the government of the nations and the good of his saints. And he that has led captivity captive, and subdued the prince of darkness, with all the armies of hell into slavery to himself, he can give them permission to exercise their rage amongst mankind under such limitations and restraints as he sees proper: Thus he may govern all things by the angels or devils, as his mediums, or instruments; and he may do it also by himself in a more immediate manner.

Let me ask, May not *Christ* keep the wheels of nature in their courses, and administer the providential kingdom by virtue derived from the indwelling godhead? May he not exert his dominion amongst all the material elements, and the inhabitants of air, earth and water, as well as amongst the spirits of the invisible world? Shall prophets and apostles and captains have a resemblance of such power given them on earth, and shall not *Jesus* the Son of God have the substance and plenitude of it, especially now in heaven? Could a *Moses* divide the sea with his rod, and turn flints into rivers of water? Could a *Joshua* say to the sun, Stand thou still, and forbid the moon to move? Could a *Paul* make fevers and dropsies depart at his word, and flee at the appearance of his handkerchief, *Acts* xix. 12? Could *Peter* heal the sick with his shadow passing over them, *Acts* xv. 15. and command *Tabitha* to arise from the dead? And shall we not suppose the man *Christ Jesus* in his exalted state, with all the power and glory of indwelling and united godhead; I say, shall we not suppose



him able to rule time and nature as he pleases, and to manage all things in heaven and earth, all things mortal and immortal?

Or if we lift our thoughts to the angelic legions and survey their powers, must we not suppose the power communicated to our exalted Saviour to be far superior to theirs? Shall it be within the power of a single angel, when sent with a pestilence, to destroy seventy thousands of *Israel* in order to punish *David's* sin, 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 15, 16? or to slay a hundred and fourscore and five thousand *assyrian* soldiers in the camp of *Sennacherib* in one night, 2 *Kings* xix. 35? or shall it be within the reach of *Satan's* power and commission, as he is the "prince of the powers of the air" to raise storms and hurricanes and to send lightning from heaven, *Jab* i. 16, 19? and shall not the blessed soul of our exalted redeemer have more transcendent power than angels or devils? Why should it not be within the reach of his human will by methods of unknown influence to govern the winds and the waters, the earthly and the heavenly bodies, to subserve the counsels of his Father and his own gracious purposes towards his people?

Or if it should be doubted at present by any of my readers, whether *Christ's* own human power reaches to an immediate management of all these affairs at so prodigious distances, yet we may be assured, as I hinted before, it is not above the power of human nature, so exalted and so nearly united to God, to give orders of this kind to the standing or fallen angels, which the divine nature has taken care shall be punctually and exactly fulfilled: and thus "he shall reign till he has brought all his enemies under his feet," 1 *Cor.* xv. 24, 25. But a farther pursuit of this subject is reserved to the following section.

I proceed now to the third instance of power and dignity to which the human nature of *Christ* is exalted.

III. "*Christ* as a man united to God is exalted to become a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to *Israel* and forgiveness of sins," *Acts* v. 31. This scripture must certainly include and chiefly regard the manhood of *Christ*, for it is that same *Jesus*, saith St. *Peter* to the *jews*, "whom ye slew and hanged on a tree, that the God of our fathers hath raised up," and exalted to this dignity.

Besides, it is impossible that the divine nature should be really and properly "exalted to be a prince and a Saviour, &c." for it would be humiliation and not exaltation for the pure divine nature to accept of these titles and perform these offices even by way of deputation and vicegerency to the Father, when it had supreme authority originally and eternally in itself without any donation or deputation.

It will be said here, "What can the man *Jesus* do toward the giving repentance and forgiveness?"

I would humbly enquire whether it were not his human nature sent forth his apostles when he was here on earth? And is it not the man *Jesus* who sends his ministers abroad into the nations in his present exaltation in heaven? Is it not still the man in whom godhead dwells? Is it not he who gives apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to publish this doctrine of repentance and forgiveness in his name? "He that ascended on high after he had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that received gifts for men, *Psal.* lxxviii. 18. and gave these gifts unto men for the perfecting the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying his body," *Eph.* iv. 8, 12?

And though we may reasonably suppose the man *Jesus* considered alone has not now, nor could ever have sufficient power in himself abstracted from deity, to change the hearts of men, make obstinate sinners become penitent, and seal the  
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forgiveness of sins with comfort to their consciences; yet the man *Jesus* may say, "Father, I will that this and the other obdurate sinner be reclaimed, softened and sanctified: Father, I will that his sins be forgiven him:" And hereupon the blessed Spirit of God works this divine change in the sinner, and seals this forgiveness to the soul. Why may not *Jesus* work wonders of grace on the souls of men, in the same way as he wrought miracles of healing on their bodies?

I add further, The man *Jesus* may exert a volition that such and such a rebellious sinner be converted, softened and pardoned; and according to the sacred and unsearchable laws of the union between his divine and human nature, the effect may be wrought and the blessing given by the omnipotence and authority of the indwelling godhead: And in this sense the exalted human nature exerting such a volition becomes a conscious instrument or agent in bestowing these divine favours. You will say perhaps, Was it not so in his state of humiliation as well as now? And what advantage then has *Christ* exalted? Did not the godhead work the miracle by the intervening act of *Christ*'s human will?

I answer, Yes certainly: But the difference between his agency in his exalted and in his humbled state, seems to be this; while our redeemer was on earth in his humbled state, he seems to live by more apparent, constant, immediate and actual addresses to and dependence on the godhead for every single miracle he wrought than perhaps he does now. This dependence was sometimes manifested to the spectators, by praying to his Father when he was to work a miracle, as in raising *Lazarus* from the dead. *John* xi. 41. "He said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and yet then he spake his will with authority, verse 43. *Lazarus* come forth." At other times this actual dependence was constantly practised, though he did not manifest it to the spectators: So when *Christ* healed the leper, *Matth.* viii. the man *Jesus* said, "I will, be thou clean," and immediately the miracle was wrought. By the intervening volition of *Christ* as man the dead was raised and the leper was cleansed; but it was the power of God was present with the will of the man to heal the sick and to raise the dead, as it is expressed in *Luke* v. 17.

And thus the man *Jesus* being now exalted to a more sovereign sort of agency, to "quicken whom he will," *John* v. 21. hath a special interest in those titles, a prince and a saviour, and in bestowing repentance and forgiveness, *Acts* ii. 31, 32, 33. because his will is made as it were the agent. He ascended to heaven, he received the promise of the spirit, he poured down those gifts of the spirit on his apostles and the primitive christians, for the ordinary and extraordinary works of grace, for it is by his will these things were done.

IV. "The human nature of our Lord *Jesus Christ* has some influence in the succour and support of tempted christians," *Heb.* iv. 15. The apostle assures us, "We have an high-priest who was tempted in all points as we are, but without sin; and he can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," that is, he has a human sympathy arising from his human sufferings, and therefore we are encouraged to "come to the throne of grace to find help." And chapter ii. verse 18. "In that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Now since his ability to succour tempted souls does arise in part from his human sympathy, and from his own experience of sufferings and temptations in his human nature, it leads us naturally to conceive that even his human soul has some hand in the succour of tempted saints.

1. Because the divine nature is not rendered more able to succour them by all the temptations that the human nature sustained. The divine nature is infinitely and eternally



eternally able to succour without any regard at all to the human nature, whether that had been tempted or no.

2. It is the design of this chapter to speak of the human nature, or rather the incarnation of *Christ*, verse 17. He must become like us in "flesh and blood, that he might be a merciful high-priest to make reconciliation:" Now here the human nature is the chief agent, or rather patient in making atonement and reconciliation, though the dignity and complete merit ariseth from its union to the divine nature. Then in the next verse his human soul having been tempted, is fitted and enabled to succour them that are tempted, by its own sympathy with them, as he was man, but still supposing him united to deity. This is the most natural and necessary sense of the words.

Observe further, that *Christ* is represented as the head of the church in many scriptures, and the saints as his members: now this headship must be referred specially to his human nature, though not excluding the divine, because the members and head must be of the same nature. The second chapter to the *Hebrews*, seems to be written with this design, to shew the necessity of *Christ's* incarnation, in order to sustain the proper and appointed relations to his own people, viz. "Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, therefore he took part of the same, that he might be a brother, a priest, a father, a succourer of the tempted, &c." Nor can any relation seem more necessarily to require his having a human nature, than that of head and members. Now in what sense can the man *Jesus* bear the relation of such a vital or sympathizing head united to his body, the church, if he has no particular knowledge of the wants, sorrows and sufferings of his particular members; if he has only a mere general confused knowledge that he has members on earth who endure sorrow and suffering, though he knows not how many, nor which they be, nor is he able as man to do any thing for their particular relief? Would it not be strange to say, He has the most near and intimate relation of headship to his members, as he is man and of the same nature with them, and yet he cannot do any thing for the support or succour of any of them, by the powers of the very nature whereby he sustains this relation, and whereby chiefly he becomes their head? It is granted that the indwelling godhead capacitates him for the supply of the wants of his members, by furnishing him with all grace; but I think that human nature by which he eminently sustains this relation and becomes a head, may be allowed to be an intelligent and conscious medium of conveying these supplies.

V. If it should not be allowed that *Jesus Christ*, as man, can bestow effectual succour and relief on his tempted saints, yet surely he is able to make particular intercession for them. It is upon this account he is declared "able to save to the uttermost those that come to God by him, because he ever lives to make intercession for them," *Heb. vii. 25*. Now we cannot suppose it is the divine nature which properly and directly intercedes or pleads for us in heaven, but the man *Jesus*, who gave us a pattern of that intercession here on earth, *John xvii*. Though it may be the divine nature united that renders this intercession so universally powerful and prevalent.

Nor can we suppose that *Christ* intercedes merely in general for all his saints without knowledge of their particular persons, or their present particular circumstances; for this is no more than every christian on earth does or should do: we should all intercede or plead in that manner for all the saints, *Ephes. vi. 18*, though our pleadings have not the same efficacy as his, nor are we supposed to have the same knowledge of their wants.

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When we are told that our great high-priest, whose special work and office in heaven is to make intercession for us, "is passed into the heavens, and that he can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having himself been tempted as we are;" can we ever imagine that this does not refer to the human nature of *Christ*, since none of these expressions are applicable to his deity? And can we think that the scripture would represent our encouragements to apply ourselves to him as an intercessor in such tender and sympathetic language, if he knew only in general that there were thousands of tempted saints on earth, but had no particular knowledge of their persons, their special kinds of temptation and present distress, which might awaken this sympathy, and engage his special representation of their cases to the Father.

VI. "The human nature of *Christ* united to his godhead is exalted to receive honours from men and angels in the upper and lower worlds, upon the account of its obedience, sorrows and sufferings." It is one part of the reward promised to men of piety, that they shall enjoy glory and honour as well as immortality and peace, *Rom. ii. 7, 10.* And surely our blessed Saviour has at least a right to share in the general promise made to men, and to have his transcendent and perfect piety rewarded with transcendent honours and glories.

Therefore when the apostle had described him as man, or the son of man, or the second *Adam*, in *Heb. ii. 9.* he adds, "We see him for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour:" For these sufferings and this death he voluntarily sustained, as a piece of the most submissive obedience to his heavenly Father and most amazing charity to mankind, therefore, he was intitled to the glorious recompence.

You find these honours paid to him in heaven, according to the Father's promise and appointment. Not only the saints who were redeemed by the blood of *Christ*, but the "angels round about the throne say with a loud voice, Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing, *Rev. v. 11, 12.* and every creature in heaven, on earth, and in the sea, join their honours and their blessings to him that sits upon the throne, and to the lamb for ever," verse 13. As the man is assumed into union with the godhead, so the whole person of *Christ* the mediator or God-man becomes the object of adoration, as our best divines generally agree.

Read what the apostle declares, *Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11.* "*Christ* humbled himself and became obedient to the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of *Jesus* every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that *Jesus Christ* is Lord, to the glory of the Father." Surely it is the human nature that seems to be exalted here to this dignity, as it stands united to the divine; and this is manifest, not only because the divine nature could not receive this exaltation, having an original and underived right to worship, but also because his human sufferings are the reason of his exaltation.

I am ready to believe that the human nature of *Christ* knows and beholds all the knees bowing to him, and hears all the tongues confessing him, or else how can this be a proper recompence for the sufferings of *Christ* in his human nature? Does the godhead derive recompences from the sufferings of the man? Or can God be said thus to exalt the pure divine nature to be the object of adoration? Has the human nature of *Christ* no share in this reward? Or is the human nature of *Christ* recompensed some other way, that is, by making a luminous figure in heaven, arrayed in bright ornaments above the clouds or stars, but ignorant of the honours done



done him by the church on earth, while yet these very honours done him on earth are declared to be his appointed recompence? How unreasonable and absurd is such a supposition!

It will be objected here indeed, "How can any thing that is not pure God be made any part of the object of religious worship? Is not this contrary to the first command, and to the general law of worship in the old and new testament which directs it to be paid to God only?"

Answer. I think the human nature of *Christ* is no otherwise capable of religious worship, according to the statutes of heaven, but by being thus gloriously united to the divine: but when it is thus united, the whole complex person may be made the object of religious worship if God see fit, since the person who is worshipped is really one with God, and has personal communion with the divine nature: But for the further removal of these objections and all the difficulties of this kind, see my dissertation of the "worship of *Christ* as God-man and mediator," dissertation III. proposition viii. ix. where I have not only proved it from scripture, but cited the testimony of some of our greatest writers to support it, such as *Turretine* and doctor *Owen*.

VII. "*Christ* as man, but in union with God, is constituted judge of the world." This is often repeated in scripture; *Acts* xvii. 31. "God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by that MAN whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." This is part of *St. Paul's* sermon to the *Athenians*: and *St. Peter* in his sermon to *Cornelius*, *Acts* x. 38; &c. says concerning *Jesus* of *Nazareth*, who was anointed with the holy Ghost, and whom God raised from the dead, he has commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is he who was ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead." It is he, even the man *Jesus* who lived at *Nazareth*, shall be the judge: It is the man *Christ Jesus*, who "descends from heaven with a shout and with the sound of a trumpet, shall send his angels, and gather his elect from every quarter of the earth;" he shall call to the dead, and they that are "in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live, for all judgment is committed to him, *John* v. 27. because he is the son of man," that is, the man the *Messiah*.

I cannot think that the manhood of *Christ* would have been so expressly and peculiarly represented under this character and office of the final judge of the world, if the affairs of that awful and solemn day, were not committed to him, and if the cognizance of the hearts and actions of men, so far as to decide their eternal states justly, were not communicated to the man *Jesus* by his personal union with the divine nature. Surely he shall not sit upon that tribunal like a glorious or shining cipher, or make a bright unactive figure there; No, by no means: The business of the judgment must pass through his hands and his head, as doctor *Goodwin* expresses it, concerning the government of the world, when he explains that text, *Matth.* xxviii. 18. And when he speaks of the judgment of mankind by *Jesus Christ*, he speaks more highly and honourably of the influence that the human nature of *Christ* will have in it, than I dare venture to do here. See vol. II. book iii. chapter the last. And indeed I may support the boldest language I use in any part of this discourse concerning the most extensive powers of the man *Jesus* in his glorified state, by such a venerable precedent: The authority of that great and excellent man will abundantly excuse and defend me among all those who have an esteem for his valuable writings.

VIII. It might be added in the last place, that our blessed Saviour considered as man, "has some unknown and most extensive ways of communicating his presence, his influence and his glory to all the millions of saints in the heavenly world;" for the heaven of each of them consists partly in "being present with *Christ*, 2 *Cor.* v. 8, and beholding his glory which the Father gave him;" that is, the glory of his human nature, or at least as God-man, *John* xiv. 3. and xvii. 24. Now it is but a poor, low, and carnal idea of the heavenly state and blessedness, if we conceive the common rank of saints to have no nearer access to *Christ*, and no more participation of his presence, or views of his glory than merely to dwell in the same spacious regions of heaven, and to behold a man afar off raised on a high throne and arrayed in light at a great distance. Surely the immediate presence of the man *Christ*, and immediate communion with him, shall be something more near, more intimate, and more blissful than such a distant sight of him.

Shall it be said, That the powers of every glorified saint shall be vastly enlarged, to take in the blessed prospect and enjoyment, though the object may be afar off? And may it not be said also with more reason, that the powers of our glorified Saviour shall be much more enlarged to communicate himself and his glories to the meanest and most distant inhabitants of heaven? May he not make himself, even in his human nature as well as his divine, immediately present with them all by a most extensive diffusion of his human as well as his divine glories?

### S E C T I O N III.

*A rational account how the man Jesus Christ may be vested with such extensive powers.*

THE great difficulty of receiving this doctrine, still lies here, "How is it possible that a human spirit should be endued with powers of so vast an extent?" Can it ever be supposed that a human soul, a man, should know all things that are done in this earth? That he should be acquainted with the hearts and thoughts of all men? And should take a sufficient cognizance of every minute affair that passes through the hands and the hearts of all human creatures, in order to govern and judge so large a part of the creation?

Answer I. Perhaps it may not be absolutely necessary that every single thought, word, or action of every particular creature should be known to the human soul of *Christ*, in order to fulfil his part or province in governing and judging mankind: but all the greater, more general, and more considerable affairs and transactions of nations, churches and particular persons, may be made known to the man *Jesus*, so far, that in union with the godhead he may be properly called the governor and the judge, and may execute and fulfil those glorious offices: and if he should not in an immediate manner be actually conscious of or actually influence the minutest circumstances and actions of men, yet he may have sufficient powers to know and influence all those greater affairs, in which the lesser and more minute circumstances are also involved.

An earthly king may be properly said to govern and judge his people, who are spread through many large provinces, without the particular knowledge of all the minuter concerns of his subjects; yet if he apply himself with diligence to fulfil his office, he may obtain a particular acquaintance with ten thousand affairs that relate to



the various provinces of his dominion; and he may employ proper agents to execute all his orders in the several towns and villages of his government, which his own eyes or his own hands perhaps cannot reach. Now surely we may justly believe that the intellectual powers of our glorified Saviour in heaven, extend vastly beyond the natural or acquired capacities of the greatest prince on earth; it is not impossible but that the man *Jesus* may not only know every saint around him in the heavenly regions, but that every saint and sinner also in this world, with all their biggest turns of life and concerns of mind, may come within his notice. Did king *Cyrus* know the face and the name of every soldier in his large army, and shall not *Jesus* the king of kings be supposed to have understanding large enough to take in all the most important affairs of this lower world, and perhaps every person that is under his government, though his knowledge should not reach all lesser circumstances?

Why may not the human soul of *Christ* be as well appointed to govern the world as the soul of man is appointed to govern his body, when it is evident that the soul of man does not know one thousandth part of the fine branchings of the muscles and nerves, and the more refined vapour or animal spirits, which are parts of this body? When the soul of man gives order to the grosser limbs to move; all these minute and subtil parts and powers exert their regular operations by an original divine influence and appointment, though the soul has not a particular consciousness of these minute parts or their subtil operations. So our blessed Saviour's humanity may be vested with the proper title and real powers of a governor of the world, without an explicit knowledge of every single atom of it; all which infinite number of atoms, may only be under the eye and influence of godhead.

The human soul of *Christ* is the brightest image or copy of the divine nature that is found among mere creatures; and though it may not receive all the infinite variety of particular ideas of human affairs, which are in the divine mind, yet it may receive as a transcript from the divine mind, so many of the largest and strongest of those ideas which relate to human affairs, as may be sufficient to qualify him for the judge of all, under the immediate influence of indwelling deity. So a man may transcribe a copy of the *hebrew* bible, viz. all the letters or consonants of it, sufficient for himself to read and understand it, though he leave out every point, vowel and accent, which sometimes may be more in number than the letters themselves.

It will be objected further, that every thought, word and action of human life may some way or other have influence on the particularities of the final judgment to diversify, enlarge or diminish the rewards and punishments of men in the future state; and if *Christ* as man knows not the minutest turns of thought in every heart, he cannot be a sufficient judge, nor award proper recompenses to every one according to their works.

I answer, If this be so, yet since the human soul of *Christ* can do so much as I have mentioned toward the cognizance and judgment of mankind, he may justly have this work assigned to him, considering it's union to godhead; and where the faculties of the human soul of *Christ* are exerted to their utmost, and yet fall short, the divine nature which is always present, abundantly supplies all that defect by a constant immediate and unknown monition and influence. "God has ordained a man to judge the world," *Acts* xvii. 31. and yet God is judge himself. *Selah. Psal.* l. 6.

And here let it be observed once for all, that I can hardly give myself leave to think that any created spirit whatsoever should know every individual circumstance of every being, and every action both in the world of bodies and the world of souls. Though doctor *Goodwin* supposes the man *Jesus* capable of all this, I rather suppose it belongs

belongs only to the omniscience of God himself to take in with one infinite, simultaneous and extensive view all the shapes, sizes, situations and motions of every single atom of which this whole globe of earth is composed, with all its animal and vegetable productions, and all the other planetary worlds, the sun, moon and stars, with every action and circumstance of all their inhabitants. I content myself rather to think it is a prerogative only of God the Creator, the infinite spirit, to be perfectly acquainted with every motion of the mind, every inward thought and manner of action that belongs to all the innumerable inhabitants of the intellectual world, both men and angels. Should it be granted that any creature could oversee and overrule every minute affair that relates to the worlds of mind and matter, and every thought and atom that belongs to them all, sometimes I think this would approach so near to the distinguishing properties and prerogatives which God hath assumed and peculiarized to himself in this world, that it would seem to take away that plain and obvious distinction between God and the creature which ought to be maintained sacred and inviolable. Scripture seems to limit my thoughts about a creature's power in this manner.

Whatsoever therefore I may speak in this treatise according to the most raised apprehensions I have of the "extent of the human intellectual powers of *Christ*," I can hardly suppose them to reach any farther than to take a just cognizance of all those greater and more important motions and actions, circumstances and relations of the material and immaterial worlds on which the government of them chiefly depends; and perhaps also even this may be impossible without his peculiar union to the divine nature. He may thus have a simultaneous and comprehensive view of all the greater affairs of every inhabitant of the upper and lower worlds, and may also have a successive and particular knowledge of any minuter circumstances that attend them, whenever the indwelling deity sees it necessary to communicate it to him for any special occasions. As the general of an army standing on a hill surveys the troops engaged in battle, he can distinguish perhaps every regiment, and their changes of ground, when they charge, and when they retreat, but cannot know every sword that is drawn, nor hear every groan; yet some particulars of this kind which relate to the single soldiers may be distinctly told him. Where that great author doctor *Goodwin*, whose opinions I cite at the end of this book, indulges his imagination to fly beyond these limits, I am constrained to leave him, lest I should seem to deify a creature, and intrench upon the supreme majesty of God.

Answer II. To make it appear that our blessed Lord in his human nature may possibly be capable of knowing all the most considerable affairs and circumstances of mankind, let us consider how far the mere native capacities of a human spirit may extend. We must not judge of the innate powers and natural capacities of the soul of the *Messiah* by the scanty measures of our own souls and their native powers. The soul of *Christ* may be reasonably supposed in its own nature to transcend the powers of all other souls as far as an angel exceeds an idiot, and yet be but a human soul still; for "*gradus non mutant speciem*," different degrees do not change the kind or nature.

When we narrow and limit our conceptions of the extensive powers of the soul of *Jesus*, and bring them down too near to our own, it is because we have too high a conceit of ourselves, and too low an idea of the great and glorious God. We are ready to fancy the difference between God and ourselves so small, as that a mind so vastly superior to our own, as I have described, must be raised immediately to godhead: whereas by the view of the powers of angels, which I have hinted before, it is possible



there may be endowment and excellencies equal to all the millions of men on earth united in one spirit, which may be yet but a created being, and infinitely inferior to the great God. And surely if there be such a spirit of such extensive excellencies and endowments, it is divinely proper that this spirit should be the soul of *Jesus* who is so intimately united to God, and who "in all things must have the pre-eminence," *Col. i. 18.*

But let us proceed in this argument to raise our enquiries how great and glorious a creature may be formed by the almighty creator.

If I might venture to speak here in the language of philosophy, it is exceeding hard for us to determine what is the maximum or minimum, the greatest or the least thing in nature. That matter is infinitely divisible is a doctrine now universally received and maintained without controversy. Now if we cannot limit the possible smallness of corporeal beings, how can we limit the possible greatness of them? Even in the animal world there are creatures whose particular limbs escape the nicest microscope, and are perhaps a thousand times less than the smallest visible grain of sand. What amazing difference is betwixt the bulk of these diminutive animals, and the bulk of an elephant or a whale? And yet the almighty Creator may form animals as much superior in bulk to a whale or an elephant, as these huge creatures exceed those invisible mites, when he had formed a world of air, earth and water fit for them. And why may not the same God perform the same wonders in the world of spirits? Can he not form a spirit of such extensive capacities as may be equal to a million of common human souls?

Let us think again, what strange difference there is between the life and activity of an eagle and an oyster, or between a grey-hound and a snail, and yet both are animals. May not therefore the soul of our Lord *Jesus Christ* exceed common souls both in the activity and extent of it's powers as much as the most sprightly animal exceeds the dullest and most stupid? As far as sun beams exceed smoke and ashes, or as far as the sun exceeds our common fires? "For in all things he must have the pre-eminence." *Col. i. 18.*

Again, Cannot the maker of all things create a new world of material beings vastly superior both in bulk and in powers to this our earth, and the inhabitants of it? Cannot an architect build a royal palace larger and more exquisitely adorned than his own little model of it? May he not form the model at the proportion of an inch to a thousand yards? And why may not the Creator of all things as much exceed our usual ideas also in forming a spirit of most extensive and surprising capacities above all other spirits? It is too assuming for us to measure all possibilities by our common conceptions.

But even our common conceptions will furnish us with some examples fit to persuade us of the vast and extensive power of a creature. Could we ever think of the pupil of the eye, that it should take in a whole hemisphere of stars, each of which is bigger than the globe of our earth, if every night's experience did not convince us: And yet this hemisphere, so vast as it is, is but one of the ideas of a human soul. There are millions of ideas besides this which are contained in the soul or memory of every modern philosopher or ingenious mechanic. Many of these our ideas indeed are successive: But why may not the soul of *Christ* be large enough in it's native capacity to take in all at once what we take in by a long succession, or what would cost us the labour of ages?

Such a glorious created mind as belongs to the Son of God may be capable, for ought we know, of extending it's thoughts backward to far distant ages, and forward beyond time, and reach far into eternity, and may also spread them abroad over the nations

nations of mankind, and all their chief affairs, and yet not be perfectly infinite as the knowledge of God is \*; for divine knowledge extends at once infinitely backward and forward through both eternities, and reaches to all possibles, as well as to what is actually past and future.

How do we know to what prodigious distances the presence, the consciousness and agency of the human soul of *Christ* may be extended? We are sure this presence is not infinite; but while we suppose it to be short of infinity, what other limits can our reason certainly set to it? How can we tell to what amazing lengths, and heights, and breadths, and depths, his immediate consciousness and immediate agency may reach? Wheresoever scripture sets limits to a creature's power, let our inquiring thoughts stop short and lie silent; but reason hardly knows where to stop, while it enquires how powerful and knowing a creature the great God can make.

Surely we have good reason to believe that the soul of *Christ* is the most intelligent, the most knowing and active creature that God ever made, and has the largest native powers; and it seems divinely agreeable that it should be so, that he might be a proper subject for the favour of a personal union with the godhead, and a proper medium whereby the great God might with honour transact his affairs among the children of men, as well as that he might be a most suitable mirror to display the divine perfections in their fairest and strongest light. Surely there is no created nature which in itself comes nearer to the perfections of God than the man *Christ Jesus*. No creature is a fairer image of God than the soul of *Christ* is, and thereby it becomes the fittest instrument for an indwelling God to act by, and yet it is infinitely inferior to godhead.

Answer III. But if the native powers of the soul of *Christ* in it's first formation, or during it's abode on earth in a humbled estate, were not sufficient for these purposes of government and judgment, yet may they not be sufficient in it's present glorified state? The powers of a soul confined in flesh and blood may be but of a narrow extent in comparison of those extensive powers which are ascribed to the man *Jesus Christ* now in heaven.

Who knows what "amazing enlargement may attend all the natural powers of man when advanced to a state of glory?" Perhaps a common spirit released from flesh and blood, and exalted to a glorified state, may extend it's powers a thousand times farther than the greatest spirit dwelling in flesh can do.

And we may suppose also that when this spirit is again united to a glorified body, it's own powers of activity, knowledge and influence may be yet farther enlarged abundantly, rather than confined, by having such a glorious instrument to assist it's operations. So a loadstone naked will draw iron; but when it is armed with steel, it will draw a hundred times as much as before, though the steel without the loadstone has no attractive power at all. Thus may the soul be in a glorified body; and indeed were it not so in some measure, why should the glorified spirits of the saints ever be united to bodies again? The resurrection of the body would be no blessing, if it did not add some new powers and advantages to the saints beyond those of a separate spirit.

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\* It is worthy of our observation how Mr. *Locke* in the "essay on the human understanding" describes the largeness of a man or an angel's memory, book II. chapter x. section 9. "It is reported of that prodigy of parts, monsieur *Pascal*, that till the decay of his health had impaired his memory, he forgot nothing of what he had done, read or thought in any part of his rational age. The several degrees of angels may probably have larger views, and some of them be endowed with capacities able to retain together, and constantly set before them as in one picture all their past knowledge at once."



Our Saviour who once dwelt in flesh and blood is now in a glorified state, united to the most perfect glorified body; and what vast additions may be made to his knowledge and power beyond what he enjoyed in the days of his humiliation and confinement to a mortal body, it is hard for us to determine. When such a capacious soul is united to a glorified body, the extent of it's native powers may receive an additional crease beyond what common souls even in glory can ever arrive at, as much as it's ennative excellencies are superior to their's.

The very extent of the power and presence of a glorified body itself may be prodigiously large in comparison of our bodies of flesh and blood. A drop of oil may be contained in a pepper corn, and not extend it's influence beyond it: But place this drop on a burning lamp, and the blaze will diffuse it's particles of light, when it is thus kindled, perhaps to two miles distance in a dark night; thence it is evident, that these diffusive particles of oil will fill a sphere of four miles diameter: A most amazing enlargement of a single drop! And why may not a glorified body, especially when it shall be called a spiritual body, as much exceed flesh and blood in it's extent of powers as a drop of oil kindled into a blaze stretches itself beyond it's own first or native dimensions?

Behold our blessed Lord after his resurrection, even before he was fully glorified, comes with his body twice "into the midst of his disciples when the doors were shut \*," *John* xx. 19, 26. Much less doth a glorified body seem to be subject to the present laws, restraints and limitations of corporeal motion.

What if we should suppose a glorified soul to have as sovereign and immediate an influence over every atom of it's own glorified body as our souls at present have over our grosser limbs? What if it be made capable of ranging and disposing the atoms, of which the body is compounded, in what form it please, and of diffusing them through unknown spaces? Hence would evidently result the safety and immortality of that body, and it's prodigious vital activity on the material world. Our safety would be in our own power, and our influence amazing, if we could place every atom of our bodies in what form we chuse, and keep it there during our pleasure.

And then surely we may allow the glorified soul of our blessed Saviour to be possessed of this power in a much superior degree, and to exert it in a far more transcendent manner: And thus the sun of righteousness, even in the operations of his human nature, may answer all the parallels of this illustrious metaphor.

The natural powers of his body thus sublimated and refined may move, for ought we know, as swift as sun-beams, which may travel many thousands of miles in a minute: It may diffuse it's influences like the sun in a most extensive sphere: It may reach our world, and the moon almost in the same moment, and penetrate earth to the center.

If the face of our Lord on the mount of transfiguration did "shine as the sun, and his raiment as the light," *Matth.* xvii. 2. If his body appearing to *St. Paul* was dressed in such a "light from heaven as exceeded the brightness of the sun at mid-day," *Acts* xxvi. 13. What diffusive and distant influences may such a glorified body be capable of on the elementary world of air, earth and water, under the command of such a glorified soul as that of our Saviour?

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\* Whatever other senses may be put upon these words, I think our common translation is the most natural, and the text seems to intimate that it was miraculous.

I cannot deny myself in this place the pleasure of publishing to the world a very beautiful resemblance, the first hints and notices whereof I received formerly in conversation from my reverend and worthy friend Mr. *Robert Bragge*, whereby the person of *Christ* as God-man in his exalted state may be happily represented. The sun in the heavens is the most glorious of all visible beings: His sovereign influence has a most astonishing extent through all the planetary globes, and bestows light and heat upon all of them. It is the sun that gives life and motion to all the infinite varieties of the animal world in the earth, air and water: It draws out the vegetable juices from the earth, and covers the surface of it with trees, herbs and flowers: It is the sun that gives beauty and colour to all the millions of bodies round the globe, and by it's pervading power perhaps it forms minerals and metals under the earth. It's happy effects are innumerable; they reach certainly to every thing that has life and motion, or that gives life, support or pleasure to mankind.

Now suppose God should create a most illustrious spirit, and unite it to the body of the sun, as a human soul is united to a human body: Suppose this spirit had a preceptive power capacious enough to become conscious of every sun-beam, and all the influences and effects of this vast shining globe, both in it's light, heat and motion even to the remotest region: And suppose at the same time it was able by an act of it's will to send out or withhold every sun-beam as it pleased, and thereby to give light and darkness, life and death in a sovereign manner to all the animal inhabitants of this our earth, or even of all the planetary worlds. Such may be the "glorified human soul of our blessed redeemer united to his glorified body;" and perhaps his knowledge and his power may be as extensive as this similitude represents; especially when we consider this soul and body as personally united to the divine nature, and as one with God.

Now this noble thought may be supported by such considerations as these.

As our souls are conscious of the light, shape, motions, &c. of such distant bodies as the planet *Saturn* or the fixed stars, because our eyes receive rays from thence; so may not a human soul united to a body as easily be supposed to have a consciousness of any thing wheresoever it can send out rays or emit either fluids or atoms from it's own body? May not the sun, for instance, if a soul were united to it, become thereby so glorious a complex being, as to send out every ray with knowledge, and have a consciousness of every thing wheresoever it sends it's direct or reflected rays? And may not the human soul of our Lord *Jesus Christ* have a consciousness of every thing wheresoever it can send direct or reflected rays from his own shining and glorified body?

To add yet to the wonder, we may suppose, that these rays may be subtle as magnetic beams which penetrate brass and stone as easily as light doth glass; and at the same time they may be as swift as light, which reaches the most amazing distance of several millions of miles in a minute. By this means, since the light of the sun pervades all secret chambers in our hemisphere at once, and fills all places with direct and reflected beams, if consciousness belonged to all those beams, what a sort of omniscient being would the sun be? I mean omniscient in it's own sphere. And why may not the human soul and body of our glorified Saviour be thus furnished with such an amazing extent of knowledge and power, and yet not be truly infinite?

Let us dwell a little longer upon these delightful contemplations.

If a soul had but a full knowledge and command of all the atoms of one solid foot of matter, which according to modern philosophy is infinitely divisible, what strange  
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and astonishing influences would it have over this world of our's? What confusions might it raise in distant nations, sending pestilential steams into a thousand bodies, and destroying armies at once? And it might scatter benign or healing and vital influences to as large a circumference. If our blessed Lord in the days of his humiliation could send "virtue out of him to heal a poor diseased woman who touched the hem of his garment" with a finger, who knows what healing atoms or what killing influences he may send from his dwelling in glory to the remotest distances of our world, to execute his Father's counsels of judgment or mercy? It is not impossible, so far as I can judge, that the soul of *Christ* in it's glorified state may have as much command over our heavens and our earth and all things contained in them, as our souls in the present state have over our own limbs and muscles to move them at pleasure.

Let us remember that it is now found out and agreed in the new philosophy of Sir *Isaac Newton*, that the distances are prodigious to which the powerful influence of the sun reaches in the center of our planetary system. It is the sun who holds and restrains all the planets in their several orbits, and keeps in those vast bodies of *Jupiter* and *Saturn* in their constant revolutions; one at the distance of 424 millions, and the other at the distance of 777 millions of miles; besides all the other influences it has upon every thing that may live and grow in those planetary worlds.

It is the sun who reduces the long wanderings of the comets back again near to himself from distances more immensely great than those of *Saturn* and *Jupiter*: And why may not the human nature of our Lord *Jesus Christ* both in soul and body have a dominion given him by the Father, larger than the sun in the firmament? Why may not the Son of God be endued with an immediate consciousness and agency to a far greater distance?

Thus if we conceive of the human soul of *Christ*, either in the amazing extent of it's own native powers or in the additional acquirements of a glorified state, we see reason to believe that it's capacities are far above our old usual conceptions, and may be raised and exalted to a degree of knowledge, power and glory suitable and equal to his operations and offices, so far as they are attributed to his human nature in the word of God? But I proceed further.

Answer IV. But if the soul of *Christ* considered singly in it's native powers, or even in it's glorified state, be not capable of such extensive knowledge and influence, yet considered in it's personal union with the divine nature, it's capacities must be enlarged to an unknown degree. And though it is my judgment, that abstracted from his godhead the man *Jesus* could not fulfil and sustain all the sacred offices and honours of the *Messiah*, yet united to his divine nature he may thereby become in a sense sufficient for all this work.

It may be inquired here, what influence this personal union with the godhead can have upon a human mind, to enlarge it's knowledge and intellectual faculties and it's effective powers to so amazing an extent?

In answer to this, we must all confess that the doctrine of unions is one of the most unknown and unsearchable difficulties in natural philosophy. Our understandings are nonplussed when we consider but the union of the parts of matter among themselves, which no philosophy has ever yet fully accounted for; and much more are we puzzled when we think of the union of matter and mind in every human person, and the strange amazing influences which the one hath upon the other by means of this union. But when we attempt to conceive of the most intimate union, into which the

he great and blessed God may assume a creature, and join it to himself, our thoughts are lost and overwhelmed with this mystery: and that not only as to the mode or manner of it, which is unsearchable, but as to the extent of the influences and effects of it, which are astonishing, and beyond all our present powers to determine.

Yet since we are thus far assured by the word of God that there is a glorious union between the man *Christ*, and the divine nature, we may attempt to explain our best conceptions about the effects of it, first as to the communications of knowledge, and then of effective power.

I. "As to the communication of knowledge to the man *Christ* by his union with the deity." We may try to illustrate this matter by the similitude of the union of a human soul to a body. Suppose a learned philosopher be also a skilful divine, and a great linguist; we may reasonably conclude that there are some millions of words and phrases, if taken together with all the various senses of them, which are deposited in his brain as in a repository, by means of some correspondent traces or signatures; we may suppose also millions of ideas of things, human and divine, treasured up in various traces or signatures in the same brain. Nay, each organ of sense may impress on the brain millions of traces belonging to the particular objects of that sense; especially the two senses of discipline, the eye and the ear: The pictures, the images, the colours, and the sounds that are reserved in this repository of the brain, by some correspondent impressions or traces are little less than infinite: Now the human soul of the philosopher, by being united to this brain, this well-furnished repository, knows all these names, words, sounds, images, lines, figures, colours, notions and sensations. It receives all these ideas, and is, as it were, mistress of them all. The very opening of the eye impresses thousands of ideas at once upon such a soul united to a human brain; and what unknown millions of ideas may be impressed on it or conveyed to it in successive seasons, whensoever she stands in need of them, and that by the means of this union to the brain, is beyond our capacity to think or number.

Let us now conceive the divine mind or wisdom as a repository stored with infinite ideas of things past, present and future; suppose a created spirit of most extensive capacity intimately united to this divine mind or wisdom: May it not by this means, by divine appointment become capable of receiving so many of those ideas, and so much knowledge as are necessary for the government and the judgment of all nations? And this may be done two ways, viz. either by the immediate application of itself, as it were by enquiry, to the divine mind, to which it is thus united, or by the immediate actual influences and impressions which the divine mind may make of these ideas on the human soul, as fast as ever it can stand in need of them for these glorious purposes.

Since a human brain, which is mere matter, and which contains only some strokes and traces and corporeal signatures of ideas, can convey to a human soul united to it, many millions of ideas, as fast as it needs them for any purposes of human life; how much more may the infinite God or divine mind or wisdom, which hath actually all real and possible ideas in it, in the most perfect manner, communicate to a human soul united to this divine wisdom, a far greater number of ideas than a human brain can receive; even as many as the affairs of governing and judging this world may require.

This may be represented and illustrated by another similitude thus: Suppose there were a spherical looking-glass or mirror vast as this earth is; on which mil-



lions of corporeal objects appeared in miniature on all sides of it impressed or represented there, by a thousand planetary and starry worlds surrounding this vast mirror; suppose a capacious human spirit united to this mirror, as the soul is to the body: What an unknown multitude of ideas would this mirror convey to that human spirit in successive seasons? Or perhaps this spirit might receive all these ideas at once, and be conscious of the millions of things represented all round the mirror. This mirror may represent the deity: The human spirit taking in these ideas successively, or conscious of them all at once, may represent to us the soul of *Christ* receiving, either in a simultaneous view, or in a successive way, unknown myriads of ideas by it's union to godhead: though it must be owned it can never receive all the ideas which are in the divine mind.

II. Having shewn how the human soul of *Christ*, by virtue of it's union with the divine nature, may be furnished with most amazing treasures of knowledge, I proceed now to enquire how the human nature of *Christ* may attain vast effective powers, and may be said to have a hand in bringing about the various revolutions of providence, in managing the affairs of the government of the world, and forming the wondrous scenes of the last judgment; and all this by virtue of it's union to the divine nature.

Let us consider what power or influence the human nature of *Christ* might have upon the miracles which he wrought whilst he was here on earth. It is very probable and almost certain, that it was a part of his divine furniture and commission from the Father, that whensoever he prayed for, and then willed or commanded any such sort of supernatural event, the effect should as certainly follow his volition or his command as the human limbs obey the soul when it wills to move them. The case of the apostles was not so; they had not a personal union with indwelling godhead; they tried once, or perhaps oftener, to cast out devils, and could not do it. But as where our soul wills, our limbs always move at it's command, so whensoever *Christ* the man willed to work a miracle, the supernatural effect followed, if not by human, yet by divine agency. Observe this in a few instances.

When he cleansed the leper, *Matth.* viii. 3. his soul willed that leprosy should depart, and his tongue pronounced these words, "I will; be thou clean:" and immediately the effect followed, the leper was healed. Whether the human soul of *Christ* had in that day sufficient knowledge and power given it to change the crasis of the blood, to remove the tainted atoms from the body of the man, and to place all the fibres of the diseased flesh in a proper and healthy form, this may be matter of doubtful enquiry: But if the divine power united to the manhood made this sovereign and healing change, and was pleased to make use of the intermediate volition of the human will, and language of the human tongue for this purpose, still the man *Christ Jesus* has his share of agency in this work; and therefore he is said to go about "working wonders and healing diseases, for God was with him," *Acts* x. 38.

Again, In the midst of a storm when he bid the winds be silent, and commanded the waves to be still, it is probable that his human soul and body might not in themselves at that time have direct and proper sufficient influence on the winds and the waves, to produce such a miraculous calm and silence; but the divine nature or indwelling godhead, by it's infinite power suppressed these tumultuous elements at the will and word of *Christ*, which rebuked the storm: And, since the man *Jesus* was made the intelligent medium or instrument of this command, the winds and the seas are said to pay obedience to him, *Mark* iv. 41. "What manner of man is this, that the winds and seas obey him?"

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It was much the same thing when he cast out devils, and commanded them to depart from the bodies which they possessed. Whether it was the terror of his known character that fell upon them and frightened them, or the compulsive power of his deity drove them out, this may perhaps be doubted. But suppose the demoniacs were dispossessed by divine agency, yet the man *Jesus* has the honour of this miracle, as being the conscious instrument of his godhead therein. It was "*Jesus of Nazareth* who healed those who were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him," *Acts* x. 38.

Yet we should take notice that in the days of his humiliation on earth, his power was limited; for he had not the knowledge of all God's counsels, "he knew not the day of judgment," and therefore could not govern the world till his resurrection and ascension, when the Father "delivered all things into his hands," *Matth.* xxviii. 18. and gave him the book of his decrees, *Rev.* v. 7—9. We may observe also that when he raised *Lazarus*, he prayed to the Father for that miracle, *John* xi. 41. as acknowledging publicly a particular dependence for each miraculous operation; "I know that thou hearest me always, and I thank thee that thou hast now heard me."

But perhaps it is otherwise in his glorified state. Imagine our Saviour in heaven, as having received full and absolute "powers over all things in heaven and earth," *Matth.* xxviii. 18. suppose him now residing in the upper world, and by his own most extensive capacity of mind and by the indwelling deity, suppose him constantly acquainted with the various counsels of God for the government of the world and the church, as particularly as he was acquainted with each single occasion of working a miracle here on earth; suppose also his commission in his exalted state to be so general and extensive, and that according to every emergency, he gives commands to the angels or devils, to the earth, air and seas, to perform such peculiar services for his people, and to bring distress upon his adversaries: Now if all the infinite variety of effects presently appear and answer his command, though really performed by divine power, he may properly be said to have "all power in heaven and in earth put into his hands," and to govern all things in the upper and lower regions; for as much as the indwelling godhead makes use of the human nature as it's glorious and conscious medium, to exert it's sovereign authority and divine power: and the man *Jesus* considered in union with godhead gives forth the commands, sees them all executed, and receives the honours and adorations of saints and angels, as their governor and their judge.

Thus if the exalted powers of the man *Jesus* in glory are not conceived to be sufficient in themselves for the complete execution of those great offices to which he is advanced, yet his human soul being united to his godhead, and always under the infallible influence of divine wisdom and counsel, and having such a most extensive acquaintance with the affairs of the upper and lower worlds, the man *Christ* may give forth all the commands of God whereby the world is governed, "and every knee may bow to him, and every tongue confess that *Christ* is Lord to the glory of the Father," *Phil.* ii. 10, 11.

If any person should enquire here, "May not any of our souls be thus assumed into union with the divine nature, and by this union be made capable of the same powers and dignities?" I answer, By no means: for though the capacity of our souls may be largely extended in a future world, yet I am verily persuaded they can never be dilated or enlarged to the amazing comprehension which the soul of our blessed Saviour possesses. Our souls in their native constitution are vastly inferior to his. As a vessel of clay can never be enlarged by all the art of man, to such a prodigious



igious capacity as a vessel of gold, so nor the soul of an ideot to contain the ideas of a *Milton* or a *Newton*; nor any other created spirit to know and do what the blessed soul of *Jesus* knows and does.

Perhaps the powers of any other human soul would be dissolved and destroyed under such impressions from indwelling godhead as the soul of *Christ* constantly receives, and by which he is fitted for his high post of mediation and government. Were it possible that the divine power should continually condescend to effect whatsoever a common human soul willed, yet this human soul perhaps has not natural powers sufficiently large to be made a conscious instrument of one thousandth part of what the soul of *Jesus* knows and wills, and does by virtue of the indwelling godhead. "In all things he must have the pre-eminence," *Cal. i. 15—18*.

Upon this representation of things, the various language of scripture appears to be true, and is made very intelligible. *Christ* says, "he can do nothing of himself, he knew not the day of judgment" when he was here on earth, &c. and yet he is said to "know the hearts of men, and to know all things;" for as fast as the divine mind united to him was pleased to communicate all these ideas, so fast was his human nature capable of receiving them. "The Father, in succession of seasons, shews the Son all things that himself doth," *John v. 20*. But God had shewn him but some lesser things comparatively at the time when *Christ* spake this; for at that time he assures the *jews*, that "the Father would afterwards shew him greater works than these." Thus, as I have shewn before, the union of the human nature to the divinity, being purely arbitrary, or owing to the will of God, the seasons and measures of divine communications made to the man *Jesus* must be arbitrary also, and limited or enlarged according to divine will and appointment.

Upon this same representation of things also it may be justly said in scripture, that "God governs the world, God only knows the hearts of all men, and God himself is the judge, and yet *Christ* is the searcher of hearts, the judge and Lord of all;" because though the man *Jesus* may have these titles and characters attributed to him, yet it is not merely the man considered abstractly in himself, but it is the man united to God, it is the person of God-man: or you may say, the divine nature, or the godhead acting in and by the man *Jesus*, who performs all these wonders, and which makes the man *Jesus* the conscious and intelligent medium of these performances; and thus he gives him the honour of being the agent.

By this account of things, there is a fair answer given to the objection that might be started against the first part of this section, viz. "If the human soul of *Christ*, which is but a creature, may have such a vast and astonishing extent of knowledge and power, does not this represent a creature approaching too near to the idea of God?" Does it not invest a creature with some of those prerogatives which are mentioned in scripture, as peculiar and appropriate to deity? And does it not thus take away the distinction which God has given between himself and creatures, as well as enervate several of our scripture proofs of the divinity of *Christ*?

I have indeed, in some measure anticipated this objection, when I limited the knowledge and power of the man *Jesus*, only to the greater and more important concerns and actions of the material and intellectual worlds, on which the government of them chiefly depends: And even this must be a very amazing and comprehensive knowledge and power for a creature to possess: But every thought, and every motion, and every atom of the worlds of souls and bodies, in my opinion is known only to God, and belongs to infinite omniscience alone.

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But to remove this difficulty and danger yet farther, let us always remember, that the human nature of *Christ*, which is so exalted has the fulness of the godhead dwelling in it, or is personally united to deity. Thence it follows, that when these most extensive powers are attributed to the man *Jesus*, it is by virtue of the divine nature that dwells in him: And therefore the complex person of our blessed Saviour may justly have these divine prerogatives of knowledge and power ascribed to him. They being given us to distinguish God from a mere creature, cannot be applied by the word of a true and faithful God to any person who has not godhead in him; and upon this account they continue their assistance to prove the deity of *Christ*.

If it were possible that a mere creature could be framed by divine power, capable in itself of some of those operations which God has assumed to himself, as his own prerogatives, such as governing and judging the world, searching and sanctifying the hearts of men, &c. yet since the great God, who is jealous of his own honour, has appropriated these characters and operations to himself alone, I think we may be assured that he would never form such a creature with these characters and operations; or at least, that he would never discover such a creature to us in our world, lest he should thereby take away the inviolable criteria or signs which himself has given us to distinguish between God and creatures. Or if ever such a glorious creature were formed and discovered to us, he would certainly be intimately and personally united to the divine nature; and thus have proper godhead dwelling in him, lest we should be unavoidably exposed to the danger of taking one for God who was not God, and paying divine honours to a person who was not divine.

Perhaps while we dwell on earth, there will always remain some difficulty in adjusting several particulars that relate to the person, the offices and the operations of our blessed Saviour: but since we firmly believe that his name is *Emmanuel*, or God with us, and that God and man are united to constitute the complete person of our mediator; since we are persuaded also that the characters and offices which he sustains, require powers superior to all created nature for the most complete execution of them; therefore where we are at a loss in determining how far the divine nature operates, and how far the human, in any special part of his offices, we may refer it in general to the complex person of the mediator as God-man. In this person we are sure there are powers abundantly sufficient to answer all the necessities and demands of every office which he sustains. When we consider him as God, it is as God united to man: When we consider him as man, it is as man united to God; and his person as God-man, our governor and our judge demands our adoration, and faith and love.

To conclude this subject, though such speculations as I have indulged in this discourse, are by no means necessary to our salvation, yet they may be applied to several excellent purposes in christianity. They may cure us of our old narrow conceptions of the glories of the exalted human nature of *Christ*, and raise in us nobler ideas of that illustrious person, whom God the Father hath advanced to so sublime a degree of power and majesty at his own right hand.

These speculations may give us a much higher esteem of our blessed Saviour, and a more affecting sense of his sorrows and sufferings in the value and dignity of them, when we observe how glorious a person he is in himself, and what a rich and surprizing recompence God the Father has made him upon this account. They may  
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teach us to pay more just and agreeable honours to the person of our redeemer God-man, and excite us to a nobler practice of gratitude, to do and suffer any thing for his sake, who has done and suffered so much for us on earth, and who continues to do so much for us in heaven. Sure it must be a culpable defect in us, willingly to withhold any part of that esteem, affection and love from the man *Christ Jesus*, which he has so richly merited at our hands by his amazing condescension, by his former mortal agonies, and by his present extensive benefits. We would not willingly treat any of our fellow-creatures at so low and unworthy a rate, as too often we treat the Son of God, who died for us and is exalted to the Father's throne, *Rev. iii. 27. and iv. 21.*

"It has pleased the Father that all the fulness of godhead should dwell bodily in the man *Jesus*," that there should be a personal union between God and man, that so the human nature being a part of the complex person of the mediator, it might be assumed into the complex object of worship: and indeed if we do not include the human nature of *Christ* in the honours which we pay him, I think we can be hardly said to give him any of that special honour in a proper sense, to which the Father has advanced him by this union: And we seem to deprive his sacred person also of that peculiar glory which he received from the Father by way of gift or reward for his sufferings. For it is not the divine nature properly, but the human which endured the sufferings, and is intitled to the reward. Whatsoever sublime honours therefore we pay to the pure godhead of *Christ*, while we have no actual regard to the man *Jesus* who is united to the deity, we seem to neglect that peculiar honour due to him, for which we have perhaps the most frequent precepts and examples in the new testament, that is, the honour due to him as God-man and mediator.

I grant that we must not separate the divine nature of *Christ* from the human, while we address him with religious worship; for the mere man abstracted from godhead doth not seem a proper object, nor justly capable of it, according to the rules of scripture: Yet while we direct our devotions to his whole sacred person, our forms of address may and ought to have frequent respect to the past sorrows and the present glories and powers of his human nature: This is to worship him, according to the patterns of worship paid to him, which stand recorded in scripture for our imitation. See *Rev. i. 5, 6. and v. 9. and vii. 9, 10.*

All the honour which we pay to the man *Jesus*, must redound to the glory of the indwelling godhead, and to the honour of the Father; yet we should look upon ourselves under special obligations, to pay particular honour and love to whom honour and love are due, and not forget the interest of the human nature of *Christ* in the smart of his sufferings, and in the glory of his exaltation, when we pay religious worship to our *Emmanuel*, or God with us. See these things more discoursed at large in my "third dissertation on the trinity," pages 518—544.

Such raised sentiments as these concerning the power and dignity of our exalted redeemer, may discover to us the sense and beauty of several expressions of scripture which before were unobserved or unknown; and may make it appear with what propriety the scripture speaks concerning the rewards and recompences which *Christ* received, on the account of his sufferings: It discovers also the distinct capacities with which he is furnished to fulfil those glorious offices of government and judgment, that the Father has invested him with.

While we give a sacred freedom to our meditations on this subject, we may feel ourselves inspired with holy breathings toward the upper world, where the person of  
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our great redeemer dwells at the right-hand of God. Such an elevation of thought may awaken in us yet further degrees of humble and sacred curiosity to arrive at a better acquaintance with the great "Theanthropos," or God in our nature, whom having not seen we love, and in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing we rejoice, *1 Pet. i. 8*. This should make us long until the time comes, when our doubtful and imperfect guesses at his glory shall vanish; when we shall view him no longer through the darkness of a glass, but see him as he is, and behold him face to face. Then shall it appear, that eternal life in our possession of it, as well as in our way to it, consists in the "knowledge of the one true God, and *Jesus Christ* whom he has sent," *John xvii. 3*. Then shall the Son of God himself, and all his saints together, rejoice in the accomplishment of that glorious language of his intercession; *John xvii. 24*. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me:" and this will be a great part of our heaven. Amen.

## S E C T I O N. IV.

*Testimonies from other writers.*

SINCE I have finished this discourse, I have met with several authors who were zealous and hearty friends of the doctrine of the deity of *Christ*, and yet have raised their meditations to a sublime degree concerning the "extensive powers and capacities of his human nature now glorified." Perhaps it will allure some readers into a more favourable sentiment of this doctrine, when they shall find that it is not a loose and wild flight of imagination, but the settled and sedate judgment of former writers of worth and eminency; and for this reason I have made the following citations.

If we were to consult the writings of ancient fathers, doctor *Whitby*\* assures us in his annotations on *Philip. ii. 9*. that "they refer this high exaltation of *Christ*, not to his divine but human nature; and that the apostle speaks not here of the exaltation of his divine nature by the manifestation of his concealed glory and power, but of the exaltation of that nature which had suffered, for this is represented in scripture as the reward of his passion. *Heb. ii. 9*. "We see him, saith the apostle, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour." And again, "The elders about the throne said, Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, *Rev. v. 12*. Though it was given to the man *Christ Jesus*, because the fulness of the godhead dwelt in him." *Col. ii. 9*.

He adds also, at verse 11. "Seeing the Father thus exalted the humanity of *Christ*, since he united the Logos to the human nature; what hinders that this exaltation should be said, to be to the glory of the Father, from whom he received even the divine nature?"

I might cite several other testimonies from doctor *Whitby*'s annotations, and every learned reader knows that in those annotations he is zealous upon all occasions to oppose the *arian* doctrine.

As

\* However, doctor *Whitby* in his latter days fell in pretty much with doctor *Samuel Clarke*'s opinion; yet when he wrote his annotations, he was zealous against *arianism*, and a fervent defender of the proper deity of *Christ*, so that his sense on this point cannot be suspected here.



As the fathers suppose this exaltation to the government and judgment of the world to belong to the human nature of *Christ*, so the school-men are zealous for the communication of such a most extensive knowledge to the man *Christ Jesus*, as renders him capable of these offices; and yet the school-men are well known to be as zealous defenders of the divinity of our blessed Saviour as any christian writers whatsoever.

The *lutherans* are as hearty believers that *Christ* is true God, and that they suppose his human nature to be advanced now in glory to an universal knowledge of all things in heaven and in earth, and that by union with his deity; so that he has a sort of omnipresence and omniscience.

If you consult the remonstrant divines, they have the same opinion of the matter; see *Limborch's Theology in latin*, book v. chapter xviii. "Though we have excluded all creatures from being the object of divine worship, yet this must not exclude our Lord *Jesus Christ* the mediator; for though as he is man he is a creature, yet by means of his mediatory office he is so highly exalted above all creatures, that religious honour must be given him as Lord of all. And in section xiii. If it be objected, that omniscience and omnipotence are required in order to render any being adorable, I answer, not essential and absolute omnipotence and omniscience, but so much as is necessary to know all the thoughts and prayers of the worshippers, and to supply all their necessities; but we have shewn that both these belong to *Jesus Christ* as mediator." Yet this author is a hearty defender of the blessed doctrine of the trinity according to the common sentiments of christianity, as appears in book iii. chapter xvii.

A very ingenious gentleman of the church of *England*, who has discoursed of the "future state, and the progressive knowledge of the saints there," page 46, writes thus; "Our Lord *Jesus Christ* remains a true man in his glorified state, and yet certainly his presence is much more extensive than when he dwelt on earth. He may perhaps as easily inspect the whole globe of this earth, and the heavens that encompass and surround it, as any of us can view a globe or circumference of an inch diameter; for he is the sovereign of mankind. He is the prince of the kings of the earth. He is the governor of the world. The laws by which they ought to live, and by which they must be judged are his laws.

"Besides, he is our great intercessor with God almighty; but how can he intercede for what he knows not, or know what he does not hear? How can all the prayers of his people come before him, unless his presence be very diffusive, and extend with the fabric of earth and heaven? I am not about to affirm the ubiquity of *Christ's* bodily presence, nor to determine the manner how he is present; but that *Jesus Christ*, even in his human nature, does view and take cognizance of the affairs of man, I think cannot be doubted. Page 49. *Christ* is the head of his church even in his human nature: How can he know the usefulness and the necessity of special communications to the several and single members of his body, without a largeness of presence?

"In brief, *Christ Jesus* considered as man and mediator is the great and general administrator of all the affairs of this human world; whatever is done in it, he does it, for all power in heaven and in earth is given unto him. Great is the mystery of godliness; and certainly, even the man *Christ Jesus* is a far more glorious person than the most of christians, yea, or of christian divines, do conceive or apprehend. He is called the sun of righteousness, and compared to light, and doth enlighten all the intellectual world. He is the express image of his Father's person; that is, perhaps the

the most lively character and expression of the deity, that is, among created beings. He is sat down on the right-hand of the majesty on high; that is, he is, next the pure godhead, the most illustrious essence in the world.

“Let no man misunderstand me in what I have said concerning the human nature of *Christ Jesus*. I do not deny his divine nature, nor the union thereof to the human: I extend the presence of his human nature no farther than the nature of his mediatory office doth require it. And touching the doctrine of the trinity, and the union of the eternal word with the human nature, I esteem it the great essential, as well as the great mystery of the christian religion, and do very heartily believe it.”

Doctor *Thomas Goodwin* in his treatise of “the heart of *Christ* in heaven,” part iii. says, “The understanding of the human nature of *Christ* hath notice and cognizance of all the occurrences that befall his members here. And for this the text is clear; for the apostle speaks this for our encouragement, that *Christ* is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Which could not be a relief to us, if it supposed not this, that he particularly and distinctly knew them; and if not all as well as some, we should want relief in all, as not knowing which he knew, and which he knew not. And the apostle affirms this of his human nature, as was said, for he speaks of that nature that was tempted here below. As all power in heaven and earth is committed unto him as son of man, as the scripture speaks, so all knowledge is given him of all things done in heaven and earth, and this as son of man too, his knowledge and power being of equal extent. He is the sun as well in respect of knowledge, as of righteousness, and there is nothing hid from his light and beams, which do pierce the darkest corners of the hearts of the sons of men; he knows the sores and distresses of their hearts. Like as a looking-glass made into the form of a round globe, and hung in the midst of a room takes in all the species of things done, or that are therein at once; so doth the enlarged understanding of *Christ*’s human nature take in the affairs of this world, which he is appointed to govern, especially the miseries of his members, and this at once.”

The same author in his second volume in folio, book iii. page 95. has a large treatise upon the “extensive glories and powers of *Christ* considered as God-man,” wherein he exalts his human nature to a most amazing degree.

Mr. *Baxter* in his annotations on *Phil.* ii. 9. affirms, “God highly exalted him in the manhood in which he suffered, and hath given him greater dignity and honour and renown than any creature ever had; that to his dignity and power all creatures should be subject, and angels and men and devils should by their submission respectively honour his name.” And in his paraphrase on *Heb.* ii. 9. “As his death was suffered in the common nature of man, so he died to bring man to glory with himself, and therefore this text may be well understood of the advancement of man both in *Christ* and in his church.”

Thus we find there are some learned writers of most of the sects and parties in the christian world who have declared themselves freely to embrace this opinion, and to believe the most extensive knowledge and power of the human nature of *Christ* in his present glorified state.

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## DISCOURSE III.

### The GLORIES of CHRIST as GOD-MAN displayed,

By tracing out the early existence of his human nature as  
the first-born of GOD, or as the first of all creatures,  
before the formation of this world.

#### SECTION I.

#### INTRODUCTION.

**T**HE various glories of our blessed Lord are the subject of our holy meditation and our joy. There are wonders enough in his person, his characters and offices, to raise our sacred curiosity, and to entertain our delightful inquiries in time and eternity. Many of these are displayed by the gospel in an open and illustrious light; others are yet unrevealed and reserved till we shall see him face to face: And there are also some which are revealed but with less glaring evidence, and are contained like hidden treasures in the mines of scripture, to awaken our diligence in the pursuit of this divine knowledge; and there is reason to hope, that every spark of new discovered glory will richly recompense the labour of our enquiries.

The foregoing discourse hath led us to find some surprizing powers and excellencies in the man *Christ Jesus*, which perhaps have not been much known or commonly observed. It is pleasant and astonishing to think how far the human soul of our exalted Lord under the conduct of his divine nature may have a hand in the government of the

the nations and the judgment of the world. This invites our faith to look forward to the great resurrection-day with holy pleasure and expectation. And if we turn our eyes backward to the beginning of all things, and read the scripture with studious search, perhaps we may spy some early glories attending his sacred person, which we never thought of before.

Now if by a more careful inspection into the word of God, we shall find it revealed there with unexpected evidence, that the "human soul of our Lord *Jesús Christ* had an existence, and was personally united to the divine nature, long before it came to dwell in flesh and blood;" and that by this glorious person, God the Father managed the affairs of his ancient church as his own supreme minister and as the great mediator and king of his people, and that at a certain appointed period of time God sent down this blessed soul, willingly divested of primitive joys and glories, to take flesh in the womb of the virgin, to dwell in the body of an infant, and grow up by degrees to the perfection of a man, and in this body to suffer a thousand indignities and injuries from men and devils, and to sustain intense pains or agonies from some unknown manifestations of the wrath of God against sin, and at last submit to death and the grave; I say, if we should find such a doctrine contained in the scripture, will not such thoughts as these spread a new lustre over all our former ideas of the glory of *Christ*, even in his human nature, and add to the condescensions of our blessed Saviour considered as God and man in one person? How happily will it make the whole scheme of our religion, and the book of God which reveals it, more intelligible and delightful to all those who love christianity? And it will render this sacred volume much more defensible against the men who doubt or deny the blessed doctrines of it.

But that I may not anticipate my design, let us proceed to unfold this doctrine by degrees, according to the following propositions.

## SECTION II.

*Some propositions leading to the proof of the doctrine proposed.*

Proposition I. "IT is evident from many places of scripture, that *Christ* had an existence before he took flesh upon him, and came into this world."

*John* i. 1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Verse 3. "All things were made by him."

Verse 14. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

*John* xii. 41. "These things said *Esaias* when he saw his glory, and spake of him:" Wherein the apostle *John* attributes to our Lord *Jesús Christ* that actual glorious appearance which *Isaiab* saw of the Lord of hosts, chapter vi. 1—4.

*John* iii. 13. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man, which is in heaven:" *ὁ ὢν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ*, or, which was in heaven, for both senses are agreeable to the greek.

*John* viii. 58. "Before *Abraham* was, I am."

*John* i. 15. "He that cometh after me is preferred before me, says *John* the baptist, because he was before me: *ἐμπροσθεν μου ἦεν ὁ ἀρχαίος μου ὢν*." One of these words which we render "before me," seems necessarily to signify a priority of time, and it is hard to say which of both of them cannot do so, but the same thing cannot be



proved by itself. The verse may be construed thus, "This is he of whom I said, he that comes after me had a being before me, for indeed he was before me, that is, he is more excellent than I; or thus, he was preferred before me, because he had his being before I had mine, though as to his natural birth as man, *Christ* was six months younger than *John*. So doctor *Goodwin* and many others interpret this text. But I proceed to other scriptures, which prove the existence of *Christ* before his incarnation.

*John* iii. 30, 31. "He that cometh from above, is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from above, is above all."

*1 Cor.* xv. 47. "The first man was of the earth earthy; the second man was the Lord from heaven."

*John* vi. 33. "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

Verse 38. "I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me."

Verse 51. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven."

Verse 62. "What and if ye shall see the son of man ascend where he was before?"

*John* xvi. 28. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father."

*John* xvii. 5. "Glorify thou me, O Father, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

*1 Cor.* x. 9. "Neither let us tempt *Christ* as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents."

*2 Cor.* viii. 9. "Ye know the grace of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor."

*Philip.* ii. 6, 7. "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, — and was made in the likeness of man."

*Colos.* i. 15. "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, for by him were all things created, — and he is before all things."

*Heb.* i. 2. "His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."

*1 John* iv. 2, 3. "Every spirit which confesseth that *Jesus Christ* is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that *Jesus Christ* is come in the flesh, is not of God."

*Rev.* iii. 14. "*Christ* is called the beginning of the creation of God. *ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ.*"

I might also cite other scriptures from the old testament, where *Christ* is represented sometimes as *Jehovah*, or God almighty; and sometimes as the angel of the Lord, and as the captain of the Lord's host, appearing to the patriarchs, conversing with *Abraham*, wrestling with *Jacob*, giving orders to *Moses*, encouraging *Joshua* and *Gideon*, &c. But I shall have occasion to mention them immediately, and therefore I omit the citations here.

Proposition II. "Among those expressions of scripture which discover the pre-existence of *Christ*, there are several from whence we may derive a certain proof that he has the divine nature in him, and is true God."

Such

Such are those places of the old testament where the angel that appeared to the ancients is called God, the almighty God, *Jehovah*, the Lord of hosts, I am that I am, &c.

Such are those places in scripture in the old and new testament where he is called God, or *Jehovah*, and is said expressly to "create the world," *John* i. 1, 2, 3. *Rom.* ix. 5. *Heb.* i. 10, 11. &c. with some others.

It appears probable to me also, that when our Lord says, *John* viii. 58. "Before *Abraham* was I am," he does not only mean to express his pre-existence, but his divine nature also, I AM being the name of God, *Exod.* iii. 14. And the great modern refiner of the *arian* scheme, doctor *Samuel Clarke* allows so much as this, viz. That from our Saviour's using the words "I am" instead of "I was," he might possibly intend to insinuate that he was the person in whom the name of God was, viz. *Jehovah*, or "I am." And he adds, "This indeed cannot be denied," though he will not allow him here to describe himself as the self-existent being. See doctor *Clarke's* "scripture doctrine, chapter II. section iii. number 591."

But there are many proofs of the divinity of *Christ* which are cited, and confirmed under the eighth and ninth propositions of the discourse on the "christian doctrine of the trinity," and which are needless to be repeated here. See pages 420—452.

Proposition III. "There are other scriptures which denote the pre-existence of *Christ*, and may also perhaps include a reference to his divine nature, but carry not with them such a full and convincing evidence of his godhead as utterly to exclude all other interpretations."

Such are these, *John* iii. 31. "He that cometh from above is above all, &c." *1 Cor.* xv. 47. "The first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven." *John* iii. 13. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man which is in heaven." \*

Proposition IV. "But there are some texts which insinuate the existence of *Christ* before he came into the flesh, which in their most natural, obvious and evident sense seem to refer to some intelligent nature belonging to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, which is inferior to godhead."

This will be made evident under the following proposition.

Proposition V. "Whatsoever scriptures represent *Christ* as existent before his incarnation in a nature inferior to godhead, do most naturally lead us to the belief of the pre-existence of his human soul."

If there be any such scriptures, they must refer either to the human soul of *Christ*, which was afterward united to his human body, or to some other super-angelical nature;

\* I confess I have cited this text in a former treatise to prove the omnipresence of *Christ* as God, and perhaps that may be part of the true meaning of it: but I have lately found two or three writers of name who heartily believed the godhead of *Christ*, and yet suppose this text may refer to his pre-existent soul, because *ὁ ὢν ἐν οὐρανῷ*, which we render "who is in heaven," may be as well rendered "who was in heaven," the participle *ὢν* being equally capable of the past as well as of the present tense or time. So St. *John* himself expresseth the time past, "he was," by *ἦν*, chapter ix. 25. where the blind man cured by our Lord, says, "I was blind," *τυφλὸς ἦν*. And St. *Paul* expresseth, "who was," in the same manner twice, *οὗτοι ὄντες νεκροί*, *Eph.* ii. 1. and verse 5. "You who were dead." *Beza* himself inclines to construe this word, "who was in heaven" in this text. Upon the whole, I doubt whether this text will certainly prove *Christ's* divinity, and whether it may not more directly refer to his pre-existent soul. For since there are proofs enough of the divinity of *Christ*, which are strong in my opinion and unanswerable, I would not constrain such passages of scripture into this service whose force and sense are rendered doubtful by any just rules of criticism.



nature, as some call it, which might belong to our Saviour, besides his human soul.

And this is evident, that this very notion of some persons concerning a super-angelical spirit belonging to him \* beside his human soul, arose from those many expressions concerning him before his incarnation which seem inferior to deity. Some writers saw these sort of expressions so strong in scripture, that they would venture to introduce three intellectual beings in the person of *Christ*, rather than not yield to the apparent force of these expressions.

But surely it is not worthy of a philosopher, or a divine to multiply natures in our Lord *Jesus* without reason, and to ascribe to him any such third intellectual nature, if the expressions of scripture on this head may be most evidently explained without it, and may be better applied to his human soul.

Now that there are such expressions that seem to intimate a nature inferior to God, belonging to *Christ* before he came in the flesh, will appear by the following considerations: And they may all be explained in the easiest manner, by applying them to the human soul of *Christ*.

### S E C T I O N III.

*Arguments for the pre-existence of Christ's human soul, drawn from various considerations of something inferior to godhead ascribed to him before and at his incarnation.*

**T**HE first set of arguments I shall use arises from several things ascribed to *Christ* before and at his incarnation, which seem to be of too low a nature for pure godhead.

Consideration I. "*Christ* is represented as his Father's messenger, minister, or angel, that was a distinct being from his Father, sent by his Father to perform such actions and such services for his people long before his incarnation, some of which seem too low for the dignity of pure godhead."

The appearances of *Christ* to the patriarchs are described like the appearances of an angel, or a man, a glorious man really distinct from God, and yet such a one in whom God or *Jehovah* had a peculiar indwelling, or with whom the divine nature had a personal union. When the angel of the Lord visited *Abraham*, and talked with him, when the man wrestled with *Jacob* till break of day, when the angel conversed with *Moses* and with *Joshua*, and yet calls himself, or is by the holy writers called *Jehovah*, the almighty, the Lord, the God of *Abraham*, &c. the most natural and obvious idea which they could have of the person appearing to them, was the idea of some glorious being or spirit that belonged to the other world, and in whom the great God had

\* Note, If in this or any other of my writings I speak of the soul of *Christ* as being an angel or an angelic spirit, or in an angelic state, I mean nothing else but his existing without a body as angels do, or his being a messenger of God the Father as they are: and in this sense the scripture calls him an angel several times. Or if I speak of him as a super-angelic spirit, I intend no more than his having both natural and deputed powers far superior to angels: for I always suppose this soul to be truly and properly a human spirit in it's own nature, that is, a spirit suited to the state of union with a human body, and to all the natural acts and effects, appetites and passions derived from such an union.

had a peculiar dwelling, and by whom the great God, pronounced those words, or conversed with them.

That text, *Exod. xxiii. 20, 21.* very naturally leads us to this sense; God says to *Moses*, "Behold I send an angel before thee to keep thee in the way, &c. obey his voice, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him." Here is an angel or messenger sent by God the Father; that is certainly an inferior character, yet he is to be obeyed with reverence, for he can punish, or pardon sins, this is a divine prerogative; and how does this angel come by it? It is not as he is an angel, or in his angelic nature, but it is because God's name is in him, that is, his divine power, his godhead is in him; this is given as the reason of this high prerogative: God is united to this glorious spirit or this human soul of *Christ*: Now it is plain that *Christ* is called an angel in other places. He is the messenger or angel of the covenant, he is the angel of God's presence, so he is called *Mal. iii. 1.* and *Isai. lxiii. 9.*

Let us argue a little further on these appearances of *Christ* to the patriarchs: Does it not seem more congruous that a human soul should animate that human body which eat and drank with *Abraham* under a tree, and should actuate those human limbs, when a man wrestled with *Jacob*? Is it not beneath the grandeur, decency and dignity of the supreme majesty of heaven, to supply the place of such a human soul for the purposes or actions of animal nature? And that the great and eternal God himself in an immediate manner should converse in so humane and familiar a way as this angel did with several of the patriarchs? That the glorious and almighty godhead should itself animate a human body to visit *Abraham*, and tarry with him some hours under a tree, while his wife made cakes, and dressed the flesh of a calf for God to eat? That the eternal God animating a body should eat of the calf which was dressed with milk and butter, *Gen. xviii. 1, 2, &c.*? That the almighty and ever-blessed God himself should immediately wrestle with *Jacob* in human limbs, which he assumed, and that a good part of the night should be spent thus wrestling until break of day, *Gen. xxxii. 24, &c.*? That the eternal godhead itself should talk so familiarly with *Gideon*, and let *Gideon* use such a familiar way of talking with God, as is recorded *Judges vi. 1—11*? Doth this suit with the supreme glory and dignity of eternal godhead and pure divinity? Doth it not seem more agreeable that God should do all this by the intermediation of a human soul, appearing in a visible shape, than that the infinite majesty of God should immediately abase itself in such a manner?

Is it not much more natural and easy, and more condecant in itself, as well as more agreeable to the words of scripture, to suppose that it was the human soul of *Christ*, assuming a body at that time for those human purposes? And thus he might be called the angel or messenger of God, because God sent him; for the word angel doth not signify originally the name of a nature, but of an office.

He might also upon this supposition, with more justness and propriety of speech, be called a man, when he appears in the form of a man, and with the appetites, passions, and actions of a man: *Gen. xviii. 2, 4, 5, 8, 17.* and *xxxii. 24.* for the soul is the chief part of a man, and especially when that soul appeared in a human body.

And yet at the same time he might be properly called God, the Lord, and *Yehovah*; for this man or angel, this human soul in an assumed body was personally united to God, or had the fulness of the godhead dwelling in him by a personal union;



union; though the more immediate agent in these animal and common actions of life was the human soul, rather than the eternal and blessed God.

The same things may be said concerning the visions which the prophets *Amos* and *Zechariah* had of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, when he "stood upon the wall with a plumb-line in his hand," *Amos* vii. 7. And when he "stood on the altar," *Amos* ix. 1. Or when "*Joshua* the high-priest stood before him, and *Satan* at his right hand to resist him," *Zeck.* iii. 1. These corporeal scenes seem better to befit the human soul of *Christ* than pure godhead, though in these appearances he is sometimes called the angel of the Lord, and sometimes the Lord, or *Jehovah*, for the reason before given, viz. because he is one with God by so intimate an union.

Consideration II. "*Christ*, when he came into this world, is said to empty and divest himself of some glory which he had before his incarnation, in several places of scripture. Now if nothing but his divine nature existed before this time, this divine nature could not properly empty or divest itself of any glory: Therefore it must be his inferior nature, or his human soul, which did then exist and divest itself of its ancient glory for a season."

The first text I shall mention, is that famous one in the prayer of *Christ*, *John* xvii. 4, 5. "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thy own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." It seems very plain from these words that *Christ* parted with some glory which he had in heaven, when he came down to finish the work which God gave him to do on earth, and he prays to be restored to it again. I appeal to every reader, whether this is not the most obvious and natural sense.

Now the glory which belongs to God, is either essential or manifestative. The divine nature of *Christ* could not lose or part with any essential glories; for they are the very nature and essence of God: nor had the divine nature any manifestative glories before the world was, which it lost at the incarnation: for,

1. It had no manifestative glories at all, if there were no angels, no creatures to which they could be manifested. Or,

2. If it be supposed that angels were before "this lower world was, and that the godhead of our Lord *Jesus Christ* might then be known and glorified by angels," it may be justly replied, that suppose this be true, yet he did not part with that glory at his coming into our world, for the angels did not forget his dignity, they continued to know and glorify *Christ*; they worshipped him on earth, *Heb.* i. 6. and ministered unto him as their sovereign, on various occasions.

Since therefore it cannot be the divine nature that parted with this glory, nor can the divine nature pray for the restoration of it, then it follows that the human nature had such an early existence, and such glory; for we cannot suppose the human nature in this place prays for a glory which it never had. This seems contrary to the most obvious sense of the text.

Or, shall we say as the *socinians* do, that the human nature prays for a glory which it had in the eternal counsels and decrees of God? But all the elect of God had also glory before the world was, in this sense, viz. in the eternal decrees and counsels: And how very forced and unnatural an interpretation is this? Yet it is such as the *socinians* are constrained to take up with, though without any reason: Besides, how unhap-

happily would such an exposition tend to support the antinomian language of our justification from eternity, &c \*.

But how easy, plain, and obvious is the sense of these words, if we suppose the soul of our Lord *Jesus Christ* to be the first born of every creature, as *Col. i. 15.* and thus to enjoy real glory and dignity in the Father's presence before the world was, as well as in all the following ages, until he emptied himself of it at his incarnation? And then he prays thus, "Father I have finished the work on earth, which thou gavest me to do in my state of humiliation here; and now, O Father, take me to thyself in heaven, where I once was, and glorify me with the real glory which I had there before the creation: My days of appointed abasement are past, therefore let the power, splendor and dignity which I have possessed in thy presence before the world was, be restored to me."

The words, "with thy ownself," in our Saviour's prayer, seem to determine it to be a real glory which he once had in God's own presence. This seems so evidently to be the sense and meaning of our Lord in his prayer, that if persons were not unacquainted with this doctrine, of the pre-existence of the soul of *Christ*; or if they had not some prejudice against it, one would think that every reader should naturally, and necessarily take it in this sense.

That it is the human nature of *Christ* that was thus glorified in it's pre-existent state, may be confirmed from verse 24. "Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Now this would be a very small thing for *Christ* to say, as to his divine nature, or godhead, that the Father loved him before the creation; but it is great and glorious, and every way suitable to his purpose, to be spoken by him as a man, referring to his pre-existent state and nature, for it gives a grand idea of him as the early and antient object of his Father's love.

Nor can this antient love be referred only to the decree of God, for this decretal love of God may be spoken of the saints also; the Father loved them as foreseen in his eternal decrees: Whereas the plain design of *Christ* is, to request that enjoyment of divine love for the saints in their measure, which he himself actually tasted and enjoyed before the foundation of the world.

Note further; he does not pray for the disciples, that they may enjoy such love as is supposed to be peculiar to the internal distinctions in the godhead, but such sort of love in their degree, as he himself enjoyed in his pre-existent soul; which exposition

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also

\* Since this treatise was written, I have met with another explication of this text, in opposition to the sense I have given, and which I confess may seem something more plausible than the rest, viz. That the human nature or person of *Christ*, does not here pray for any glory to be restored which was lost, but for the present manifestation of the glory of his godhead to mankind, which glory was really eternal, and before the creation: or he prays, that the human nature may have it's due share of honour, upon the account of it's union to the divine nature, which had a glory before the world was; which honour was withheld from the human nature in a great measure till his sufferings were finished: so that with regard to his divine nature, he prays only for the manifestation of the glory; but in respect of his human nature, he prays for the real communication of that glory which might belong to such a sublime union with the eternal godhead.

All that I shall reply to this at present is, That it is so much more difficult and intricate for any reader to find out this exposition than that which I have given, that I leave any impartial person to judge which is the most natural and easy sense, and which must the apostles most naturally receive and understand when these words were spoken in their hearing. Indeed all other expositions, besides this which I here support, are forced and strained, and distant from the natural ideas which occur to every reader. And all divines who believe not the doctrine of *Christ's* pre-existent soul, have been always puzzled to find any tolerable sense to put upon these words.



also renders all the latter verses of this chapter more intelligible: Verse 21, 22, &c. "that they may be one as we are one, and——thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." The love which the great God bears to *Christ* as man, and the union of *Christ* as man, to the godhead, is made a pattern of the union of the saints to God, and the love of God to them: But we can hardly suppose the ineffable, eternal and essential, and necessary union and love between the sacred distinctions in the godhead itself, can be a pattern of the unnecessary, unessential, and voluntary union and love between God and his saints. Yet the union and love between *Christ* as man, and God his Father, may be made a pattern of the love and union between God and believers; though we must always maintain a high sense of the unknown and sublime difference between the union of the man *Christ* to the divine nature, or to any particular distinction in it, and the union of the saints to God: The one is so near, as that what God himself speaks and does, is attributed to *Christ*; but it would be blasphemy to attribute this to the best of saints.

It is a certain and excellent rule for the interpretation of scripture, laid down by all judicious men, and particularly by a great adversary of this doctrine, doctor *Sherlock*, "that we should never have recourse to a strained and metaphorical sense, but when we know that either the nature of the thing, or some other revelation of scripture will not admit of a proper one; and that we must understand words in a proper and natural sense, where there is no apparent reason of a figure." Now there is nothing either in nature or in scripture that forbids this literal exposition, as will more abundantly appear in the following part of this discourse.

The second scripture I shall cite for this purpose, to shew that some things inferior to godhead are ascribed to *Christ*, before and at his incarnation, is in *Philp.* ii. 5, 6, 7. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in *Christ Jesus*, verse 6. who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; verse 7. but made himself of no reputation." *ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσας*, which is more exactly translated, he emptied himself\*, and took upon him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, as it is in the greek, *ἐν ὁμοιωσει ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος*.

Here the apostle's design is to set *Christ* before them as a pattern of humility; and this he doth by aggrandizing his former state and circumstances, and representing how he emptied himself of them, and appeared on earth in a very mean and low estate. Therefore he saith, "Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God;" that is, his human soul, which is the chief part of the man, being in union with his godhead, was vested with a god-like form and glory in all former ages; thus he oftentimes appeared to the patriarchs, as the angel of the Lord, and as God or *Jehovah*, with a heavenly brightness about him, or clothed with the divine *shekinah*, the robe of light, and spake and acted like God himself. This seems to be the form of God, which the apostle speaks of; nor did he think it any robbery or sinful presumption so to do, that is, to appear and act as God, since he was united to the divine nature, and was in that sense one with God†: Yet he emptied himself, that is, he divested himself of this god-like form or appearance, this divine *shekinah*,  
and

\* See doctor *Goodwin's* exposition of this text in a few pages following. See pages 812, 813.

† I might have omitted the paraphrase of these words, "who thought it not robbery to be equal with God," since I am constrained to confess that I am not fully satisfied in the true meaning of them. Those who will read with an impartial eye what doctor *Whitby* has written in his annotations on this text, even while he was zealous against the *arian* doctrines, and took all opportunities in his comments to refute them,

and coming into the flesh, he consented to be made in the likeness of other men; nay, he took upon him the form of a servant instead of the form of a God, that is, instead of the glorious vestment of light, in which he once appeared and acted as God; he now came in a mean servile form, and humbled himself even to death, &c. as it follows.

Now that this text is most naturally interpreted, concerning the pre-existent soul of *Christ* and it's humiliation, and not concerning the abasement of his human nature, will appear, if we attend to these things.

1. It is the chief design of this scripture to propose to the *Philippians* a wonderful example of humility and self-denial. Now a great and pious writer of this age has observed, that we never find the divine nature, or godhead, propounded to us, as an example of self denial or humility in all the bible; though God commands our conformity to himself, in holiness, love and beneficence. Therefore it must be some inferior nature, or *Christ's* human soul is proposed as an example of humility, and self-denial; and a glorious example it was, when it divested itself of such a god-like form, and such a pre-existent glory.

2. *Christ's* being in the form of God cannot here necessarily signify his godhead, because it is represented as inconsistent with the state of his humiliation; for he seems to put off this form of God, or he emptied himself of it, and put on the opposite form, viz. the form of a servant, when he became incarnate, or was made in the likeness of men. But it is plain that he could not put off his godhead when he became incarnate: Therefore it must refer to his human soul which was in the form of God, or which made these godlike appearances before his incarnation, and he put off this divine form, when he took on him the fashion of a man, and the form of a servant.

Besides, the form of God can never be proved to signify his divine nature in this place; for there is no expression like it in scripture, that signifies proper divinity. Nor indeed does *μορφή* properly signify nature or essence any where in the bible, that I can find, but only appearance, shape, or likeness. See the large citation out of doctor *Thomas Goodwin*, within a few pages following, pages 812, 813.

Observe also that the form of God stands here expressly opposed to the form of a servant: Now *Christ* was not directly and expressly in the condition of a servant in the civil life here on earth, though he "condescend to perform servile offices upon some occasions; but at the same time he claimed the authority of a master, over those very persons for, or towards whom he performed servile offices: The condition of our

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Saviour

them, and who consider at the same time what sense the ancient *greek* writer *Heliandorus* in several places, and the *greek* fathers generally put upon this phrase, will be ready to believe they signify, that *Christ* did not think equality with God to be *εργασίαν*, a thing to be seized, a thing to be assumed by him, he did not think proper to appear like God, or assume equality to God in his humbled estate: and so this sentence expresses one part of his humility. On the other hand, he that peruses what the learned doctor *Waterland* has written in his sermon on this text, may be inclined to doubt of this exposition of doctor *Whitby* and the fathers, and to construe these words as part of the most exalted dignity of *Christ*, according to our *english* translation: though doctor *Waterland* himself does not deny that the ancient *greek* writer *Heliandorus*, and most of the ancient fathers, expounded it in the sense which doctor *Whitby* gives of it.

However I have here followed our *english* translation, and paraphrased it as expressive of *Christ's* most exalted character and godhead, that it may evidently appear that the other parts of this verse are most happily applied to the pre-existence and the incarnation of the human soul of *Christ*, even though these controverted words should be referred to his divine nature; and that this doctrine of *Christ's* pre-existent soul does not want any change in the common *english* translation, nor the sense of this phrase to be altered in order to support it.



Saviour therefore, whilst on earth, though it was always mean, yet was not properly that of a servant; and consequently, since his being in the form of a servant, cannot possibly signify more than his acting sometimes as a servant, though he was not such by condition of life, it is plain that his being in the form of God cannot possibly signify his being by nature the very God." But rather his appearing sometimes heretofore and acting as God. So doctor *Bennet*, on the trinity, chapter VII. page 45 — 50. who is a zealous defender of the deity of *Christ* against doctor *Clarke*.

3. Consider further, it seems to be that same nature emptied itself which was afterwards filled with glory as a recompence: And it is the same nature that is said to humble itself, which was afterwards highly exalted by God: Now this was not the divine nature of *Christ*, but the human; therefore it must be the human nature of *Christ* that emptied itself in this text; because it appears very incongruous for the apostle to say, that the divine nature emptied and abased itself, and that the human nature was exalted as a recompence of this abasement.

I grant it was great condescension in the divine nature of *Christ* to unite itself to a creature, such as the human soul of *Christ* was, how glorious so ever that creature might be; and it is yet greater condescension in the godhead of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, thus united to the human soul to take human flesh upon it, or flesh in union with that soul, and for God himself to be thus manifested in the flesh: And in my judgment the infinite merit of his sufferings arises from the union of his divine nature to the soul, and thereby to the body of the man *Jesus*: But this does not seem to be the precise meaning of the apostle in this place; for he rather sets before us an example of the humility of the man *Jesus Christ*, who existed as a spirit personally united to God, or one with God in all former ages, and was dressed in glories suitable to this union; yet he laid aside those glories, and waved the resplendence of his character, and person, when he joined himself to flesh and blood; he laid aside the god-like forms and appearances, which perhaps he had worn both in heaven and on earth in times past, and emptied himself when he came now into the world to be incarnate, that is, when he came into the complete likeness and fashion of a man; for he appeared in a mean form, like a servant, and humbled himself even to the cursed death of the cross.

Left any of my readers should be offended with my exposition of this text, I will here add doctor *Thomas Goodwin*'s interpretation of it, volume III. book iii. chapter vii. page 106. "That nature or creature which the Son of God shall assume, be it man or angel, must by inheritance exist in the form of God, *Philip*. ii. 6, 7. which form of God I here take not to be put for the essence of God, neither is the form of a servant taken for the nature of a man. The form of God here is that god-like glory, and that manifestation of the godhead which was, and must needs be due, to appear in the nature assumed; for form is put for outward appearance and manifestation in respect of which, *Christ* as God-man is called the "brightness of his Father's glory," *Heb*. i. 2. Brightness, you know, is not the substance of the light, but the appearance of it. — And in this respect *Christ*, God-man, may be said in a safe sense to be equal with God, as here in the text; not in essence, but in a communication of privileges, that as God hath life in himself, alone, which is a royalty incommunicable to any mere creature, so this son of man when once united unto the godhead, is also said "to have life in himself," *John* v. 26. this equality, or *isótes*, not being to be understood of equality in proportion, but of likeness; his privileges were such

such by the union with the second person, that he had a true kind of partnership with God the Father in his privileges, and such as did arise to a likeness, though not to an essential equality." And chapter viii. page 110. he adds, "The first ingredient into the satisfaction of *Christ* lies in the laying aside the glory due to the second person, when he should dwell in a human nature, and instead thereof taking on him the form of a servant. — God will have him emptied, the *Messiah* shall have nothing left, not a grain or mite of the riches of his glory." And in volume II. "Of the knowledge of God," book iii. page 201. he adds, "He that had all fulness had nothing left, no comfort in God or in any creature: He might say as *Naomi* saith, "The Lord hath dealt bitterly with me, I came from heaven full, but he brought me to earth empty, and emptied of all." Thus far that eminent and pious writer.

But after all, if any humble christians should, be afraid to admit my exposition of this text, which is so plain and natural, lest they should seem to weaken one supposed proof of the divinity of *Christ*, — yet the next scripture is as plain for my purpose, and will lead into no such danger.

And that is, 2 *Cor.* viii. 9. "Ye know the grace of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might be made rich."

I know not how this can be well interpreted any other way than by supposing our Lord *Jesus Christ* as man, or his human soul to pre-exist in a former state, wherein he was rich indeed, and endowed with many real glories and privileges; and yet he divested himself of them, and became poor for our sakes, when he became incarnate, a helpless infant who lay in a manger, and was the son of a carpenter.

It cannot be said of God, or the divine nature, that he became poor, who is infinitely self-sufficient, and who is necessarily and eternally rich in perfections and glories, and in the indefeasible possession of all things: Nor can it be said of *Christ* as man, that he ever was rich, if he were never in a richer state before than while he was here on earth; for during that time he was always extremely poor, the son of man had not where to lay his head: And he could not be in a richer state as man before, if nothing of this manhood existed before his incarnation.

But if to evade this, any one will say, that he was rich as God, and became poor as man: Bishop *Fowler* answers, that this is "such a strain and force upon the words of scripture, that it looks like laying hold upon any thing to help at a dead lift."

It appears then that our Lord *Jesus Christ* really emptied himself of some peculiar glories that belonged to him, and which he possessed in a pre-existent state before he came to dwell in our world, and to take flesh upon him.

But I know and lament the unhappy force of prejudice. I have felt and feel it too often, and therefore wonder not at other men. A mind pre-engaged cannot easily yield to the force of plain expressions and the literal sense of scripture; therefore some will say, that *Christ*, as God-man, in the beginning of the union of the two natures, emptied or divested itself of the riches and glory which he should have had, and which were his "de jure," though not "de facto;" that is, which he might justly have assumed and possessed, though he did not actually assume and possess them. But I reply, why should this scripture be so strained, since this cannot be the sense of other scrip-



scriptures which are parallel to this? particularly *John xvii. 5*, which speaks expressly of "glory which *Christ* had with the Father before the world was." And as for the other texts, viz. *Philip. ii. 6, 7.* and *2 Cor. viii. 9.* they intimate more than a mere right to glorious riches, and plainly refer to a former actual possession of those riches and glories of which he actually dispossessed himself. This is the most literal and obvious sense of the apostle, nor should we strain it to a tropical meaning without evident necessity.

The whole current of scripture, as well as these particular texts, seems to lead us so naturally into this sentiment, that divines are frequently ready to describe God the Father as parting with his only Son out of his bosom, when he took flesh upon him; and they represent *Christ*, or the Son of God when he became incarnate, as "leaving the bosom of his Father, quitting the felicities of the upper world, laying by his glorious estate, and parting with heaven for a season," &c. which language cannot be true nor proper when it is applied to the godhead of *Christ*; but would most appositely denote and express the real humiliation of his pre-existent soul.

Consideration III. "That very being which came down from heaven and was sent of God into the world, is represented as capable of having a will different from the will of God the Father, and therefore it must be inferior to godhead: Now this could be no other but the will of his human soul."

Our Lord *Jesus* declares, that he "came down from heaven not to do his own, but his Father's will," *John vi. 38.* It is manifest here that the very same being which came down from heaven, fought not by his descent to fulfil his own will, but his Father's.

Now it is evident that at his agonies and passion he had such a will different from the will of his Father, when he manifests an innocent reluctance of human nature at first, but afterward says, *Luke xxii. 42.* "Father, not my will, but thy will be done;" and you see he uses the same sort of language to express his incarnation and mission, though without any reluctance. *John vi. 38.* "I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me." Now would it not sound very harsh to suppose the godhead of *Christ*, saying, "I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me," when it is utterly and eternally impossible that the godhead of *Christ* should have any will different from God the Father?

It is in the same manner that our Lord speaks in prophecy concerning himself, *Psal. xl. 8.* "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea thy law is within my heart. Now that this refers to his incarnation in an especial manner, we may learn from the epistle to the *Hebrews*, where this prophecy is cited and explained, chapter x. 5, 7. "When he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and burnt-offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me; — lo I come to do thy will, O God." This seems to be the proper language of his human soul, and not of pure godhead.

Those who refuse to expound this concerning *Christ's* pre-existent soul, apply it to his inferior and delegated character as mediator, and as the Father's servant employed in this great errand. But I appeal to every one who reads the words, whether this language does not naturally seem much rather to belong to an inferior being, than to the eternal godhead assuming an inferior character.

Consideration IV. "*Christ* represents his own coming into the world, and being sent hither by the Father, in such a manner as naturally leads one to suppose he had a real

a real and proper dwelling in another place\*, and in another manner before he came into this world, and that he then changed his place and company and manner of life; all which seem more agreeable to a human spirit, than to a divine person."

The mere repetition of our Saviour's own language in several scriptures would naturally lead one to these ideas. *John* vi. 38. "I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. Verse 51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven," in imitation of the manna which came from the clouds. Verse 62. "What and if ye shall see the son of man ascend up where he was before†?" *John* viii. 14. "I know whence I came, and whither I go."

*John* xvi. 28. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." In which words his being with the Father, and his being in the world, seem to be two opposite states, and are represented as inconsistent with each other in that sense in which *Christ* speaks of his Father's company and absence; but the pure divine nature can hardly be represented as absent from the Father, even while it resides in this world, nor as returning to him afterwards.

Let it be noted also, that as soon as *Christ* had spoke these words, his disciples answer, "Lo, now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no parable;" that is, there is no difficulty or obscurity in these words. No enigmatical or allegorical speech, saith *Besa*. But surely there is difficulty and obscurity in them, if we must construe them by figures, and not in the obvious sense; especially if his coming from the Father, that is, as God, must be taken in a figurative sense, and his going to the Father, that is, as man, in a literal.

There are other expressions of scripture to the same purpose, *John* iii. 13. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man, who is, or was, in heaven," as the *greek* participle *ἐστιν* may be properly interpreted in the time past or present; and thus it may be construed to signify either the divinity of *Christ*, or rather his pre-existent soul||.

*John*

\* I do not here enter into that philosophical question, whether separate souls have proper places or no, or any local motion, but I speak after the common manner of speech, and the language of scripture.

† Some may object against this text, and say, That it cannot mean that the human soul ascended where it was before, for the human soul in it's pre-existent state cannot be called the son of man. I answer, 1. That the name son of man ordinarily signifies no more than man, or some considerable man, and when applied to *Christ* it means the *Messiah*. 2. It is at least a more proper term to signify *Christ's* human soul, than it is to signify his divine nature, and to say, "What if ye shall see the son of man, that is, the human nature ascend where the son of man, that is, the divine nature, was before?" And yet this must be the exposition of the place, if *Christ* had no pre-existent soul, and I am sure this is much harder, and more catachrestical than the sense I have given.

|| This text is seized by the *sozinians*, and pressed by them to support their invention of *Christ's* ascending locally to heaven after his baptism, there to receive more complete instructions from God. But the learned Mr. *Fleming* replies thus, "There can be no just inference from his denying the *jews* to have ascended into heaven, that he had ascended thither himself, any more than if a native of *Japan* should come now to *England*, and speak to us after this manner; "Ye have reason to believe what I say of my own country, for I speak what I have seen there, and do exactly know it. And none of you did ever go to *Japan*, excepting me only, who have my, original, residence there, and am a native of the place, and am come from thence hither." Would these words necessarily infer, that he must have gone from *England* to *Japan* before he came from thence, because perhaps the connexion of the words does not run in our usual mode of speaking?" Thus that author.

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*John* iii. 31. "He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth. He that cometh from heaven is above all." *John* xiii. 3. "Jesus knowing that he was come from God, and was going to God." *Eph.* iv. 9, 10. "Now that he ascended, what is it, but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" This perhaps may be better interpreted concerning his descent into the womb of the virgin, than into the grave, for *David* uses the same expression, *Psal.* cxxxix. 15, where he says, "His substance was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth." Besides, it was the soul of *Christ* that descended from heaven, but not into the grave. Now, saith the apostle, "he that descended thus, is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens;" that is, the soul descended to assume a body, and then being embodied, it ascended above the heavens.

Objection. There are expressions in the old testament which represent God as coming down upon earth to visit the affairs of men; and in this analogical sense the godhead of *Christ* may be said to ascend and descend, so that these words need not to be applied to any pre-existent soul of *Christ*.

Answer I. When this manner of speech is used concerning God, it must be interpreted figuratively or analogically, because the literal sense cannot be true: but where the literal sense is just and plain and easy, there is no need to run to figures.

Answer II. Let it be noted also, that when God is said to descend from heaven, or ascend thither in the old testament, perhaps it is so expressed to shew that this God is *Jesus Christ*, or the human soul of *Christ*, united to the godhead in the pre-existent state, as shall be shewn hereafter, by whose service God the Father managed a thousand affairs of the antient ages, and more especially such as had any relation to the welfare of the church, or the holy seed.

Answer III. But besides, when we consider the frequency of these expressions, *Christ's* coming down from heaven, coming from the Father, and coming into this world, they seem to bear a plain and just antithesis to his departing from the world, his returning to the Father, his ascending into heaven, which are mentioned at the same time: Now all these latter expressions are plainly understood by every reader concerning the human nature of *Christ*, and give us good ground to infer that the former expressions concerning his descent from heaven should be attributed to his human nature too; that is, to his human soul, which is the chief part of it.

Under this head, bishop *Fowler* adds for a further proof of it, *1 Cor.* xv. 47. "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven;" "Which, says he, the apostle speaks of *Christ's* original in opposition to *Adam's* thus; his soul was created on earth, a body being made out of the earth for it; but the soul of *Christ* was created in heaven, and therefore he is called the Lord from heaven. This is abundantly more intelligible, to me at least, than how the eternal word should come down from heaven, otherwise than as in union with the soul of *Christ*; since the eternal word ever filled all things with his presence, and therefore could never for a moment leave heaven," that is, really and properly, but only in an analogical sense.

I add

I might subjoin also, that the exaltation of *Christ's* human soul to the heavenly world immediately upon it's first existence may be well enough called an ascent into heaven, when it is evident that the scripture uses many expressions as distant as this is from their grammatical meaning, in order to form a "paronomasia" or chime of words, with an antithesis of sense, which were eastern beauties of speech.

I add also, that the following words confirm this sense. Verse 49. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly;" that is, our souls are made now on earth and joined to bodies, to frail and feeble bodies, capable of disease and corruption, as was the soul of *Adam*, which was made on earth after his body was formed: But as the soul of *Christ* came down from heaven, and assumed a body upon earth, so the souls of the saints at the resurrection shall come down from heaven, and assume their immortal bodies upon earth: And in this sense *Christ* the second *Adam*, the Lord from heaven, is the pattern of the saints resurrection much rather than the first; and the parallel which the apostle represents of our bearing the image of the earthy and the heavenly *Adam*, is much more just, perfect and natural, if we take in this part of the resemblance as well as others.

Some would construe these words, "The Lord from heaven," to signify the divine nature of *Christ*. But let it be observed, that the apostle's design here is only to shew how the man *Christ Jesus* shall be the pattern of saints raised in glory; and it is no part of his purpose here to represent saints as bearing the image of God, or his divine nature, but only the image of his glorified human nature, and therefore these glorious expressions rather refer to his human soul.

Now put all these things together, and we can hardly suppose our blessed Lord or his apostles should express his real and proper human descent from heaven in plainer words than those which have been cited, or in words more fitted to lead every common reader into this plain and easy sense.

To conclude this section, if the most natural and obvious sense of scripture leads us to believe, that there was a glorious being who is sometimes called an angel, and sometimes a man under the old testament, who was clothed with peculiar rays of glory, and assumed divine prerogatives, and yet in other parts of his character and conduct appears much inferior to the majesty of pure godhead, and that this illustrious being emptied and divested himself of his peculiar riches and glory when he came to dwell in flesh, that he was capable of having a will different from the will of his Father, as appears in those words of his, "Father, not my will, but thy will be done;" *Luke xxii. 42.* and that he did really leave his dwelling with the Father, and come down into our world, I know not to what subject all this can be so well applied as to the human soul of *Christ*, and its existence before his incarnation.

#### S E C T I O N IV.

##### *Miscellaneous arguments to prove the same doctrine.*

**T**HOUGH the considerations already offered carry with them a good force of argument, yet all the reasons which support the doctrine of *Christ's* pre-existent soul cannot be reduced to one general head. There are several others which are not so easily ranged under any head, that can give their assistance to this work; and therefore I call them miscellaneous, and propose them thus.

Argument I. "It seems needful that the soul of *Christ* should be pre-existent, that it might have opportunity to give it's previous actual consent to the great and painful undertaking of atonement for our sins."



It was the human soul of *Christ* that endured all the weakness, poverty and pain of his infant state, that sustained all the labours and fatigues of life, that felt the bitter reproaches of men, and the sufferings of a shameful and bloody death, as well as the buffetings of devils, and the painful inflictions of the justice of God. This is evident, for neither the divine nature, nor the mere flesh or body abstractly considered, are capable of pain nor shame without the human soul. Surely then it seems to be requisite that the soul of *Christ* should give it's actual free consent to this undertaking before his labours, pains or sorrows began, which was as soon as ever he was born.

One cannot but think it very congruous and highly reasonable, that he who was to undergo so much for our sakes should not be taken from his childhood in a mere passive manner into this difficult and tremendous work. And afterwards only give his consent to it when he was grown up a man, upon a secret divine intimation that he was born for this purpose. It looks most likely and condecant in respect of the nature of things, and the justice of God, that *Christ's* human soul which endured all the pains, should well know before hand what the glorious work of mediation would cost him, and that he should voluntarily accept the proposal from the Father: Otherwise it rather seems a task imposed upon him, than an original and voluntary engagement of his own; whereas such an imposition would seem to diminish the merit and glory of this noble undertaking, and is also contrary to scripture in itself.

But if we suppose the human soul, united to the divine nature at it's first creation, and being thereby fully capacitated for this amazing work, receiving the proposal with cheerfulness from God his Father from the foundation of the world, and then from an inward delight to glorify his Father, and from a compassionate principle to the children of men, undertaking this difficult and bloody service, and coming down into a human body to fulfil it: this highly exalts the merit of his love, and the condescending glory of his labours and his sufferings.

And indeed this voluntary consent of his to become incarnate and to suffer, is plainly represented in several places of scripture; *Psal.* xl. 6, 7. *Heb.* x. 5. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, these were not sufficient to expiate the sin of man; thou hast prepared a body for me; then said I, lo I come, that is, to dwell in this body, to undertake this work; I delight to do thy will, O my God." "And these two expressions, *Psal.* xl. 6, 8. My ears hast thou bored, and thy law is in my heart, are more proper, saith doctor *Goodwin*, vol. III. book iv. pages 142, 143. to apply to the soul of this human nature, and to be understood to be the voice of his human nature, rather than of the divine: He was willing and obedient to do God's will, as a servant to do his master's." And this great author thought this consent so necessary, that he rather ventures to introduce a most miraculous scene, than to have this early consent of *Christ* as man omitted; and therefore he supposes that in a miraculous way the human soul of *Christ* did give itself up to this work from his very birth.

His own free consent appears plainly in these words, "He humbled himself," *Phil.* ii. 7. He emptied himself of glory when he became man, and died for sinners. And he himself took part of flesh and blood with this design, that he might die, "that he might through his death destroy the works of the devil," *Heb.* ii. 14. He declares further his own free consent, *John* vi. 38. "I came down from heaven to do my Father's will." And *John* x. 17, 18. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again." No man taketh my life from me, that

that is, against my free consent; but I lay it down of myself, that is, of my own choice and voluntary ingagement. "This thought I propose, says the defender of bishop Fowler's discourse, to be well considered by all free and ingenious minds, and by all those who would not in the least derogate from the honour of their blessed mediator *Christ Jesus*," and the amazing love that appears in his mighty undertaking.

Argument II. "The covenant betwixt God the Father and his Son *Jesus Christ* for the redemption of mankind, is represented in scripture as being made and agreed upon from or before the foundation of the world. Is it not then most proper that both real parties should be actually present, and that this should not be transacted merely within the divine essence by such sort of distinct personalities as have no distinct mind and will? The essence of God is generally agreed by our protestant divines to be the same single numerical essence in all three personalities, and therefore it can be but one conscious mind or spirit. Now can one single understanding and will make such a covenant as scripture represents?"

I grant the divine nature which is in *Christ* from eternity contrived and agreed all the parts of this covenant. But does it not add a lustre and glory, and more conspicuous equity, to this covenant, to suppose the man *Christ Jesus*, who is most properly the mediator according to 1 Tim. ii. 5. to be also present before the world was made, to be chosen and appointed as the redeemer or reconciler of mankind, to be then ordained the head of his future people, to receive promises, grace and blessings in their name, and to accept the solemn and weighty trust from the hand of his Father, that is, to take care of millions of souls? Read the following scriptures, and see whether they do not imply thus much: 1 Tim. ii. 5. "There is one mediator between God and man, even the man *Christ Jesus*." Eph. i. 3, 4. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in *Christ*; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." 2 Tim. i. 8, 9, 10. "God hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in *Christ Jesus* before the world began." Tit. i. 2.—"Eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Now to whom could this promise be made but to *Jesus Christ*, and to us in him, as the great patron and representative of believers? Rev. xiii. 6. "All that dwell on earth shall worship the beast, whose names are not written in the book of life of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Whether these words, "from the foundation of the world," refer to the slaying of the lamb by way of anticipation, or rather to writing of the book of life, yet they certainly refer to the transaction of this important affair with the lamb, and therefore this expression is used several times in the book of the *Revelation*.

It was by virtue of this covenant, and the sacrifice of his own blood which *Christ* was to offer in due time, that all the benefits of this covenant were derived upon mankind in the various ages of it ever since the fall of man; therefore *Christ* was a Saviour from the beginning of the world; and those who apply all these things merely to the divine nature of *Christ*, as consenting to this covenant upon the proposal of the Father, yet they suppose the human nature of *Christ* to be included in it, in the view of God the Father, by way of "prolepsis" or anticipation. But surely it seems much more proper to explain these things concerning the human soul of *Christ* as actually united to the divine nature, and actually consenting to this covenant, since the human nature was to endure the sufferings; and then we need not be constrained to



recur to such proleptical figures of speech to interpret the language of scripture, since the literal sense is just and true.

Thus it appears, if we consider this covenant as made betwixt God the Father and his Son, and as it is usually called the covenant of redemption, it seems to require the pre-existence of the soul of *Christ*. Or if we consider the covenant of grace as it has been proposed to men in all ages since the fall, the existence of *Christ* as God-man appears requisite also to constitute him a proper mediator. It does not seem to be so agreeable a supposition to make this covenant for the salvation of men from the vengeance of God to run on for the space of four thousand years together, that is, from the creation and fall of man to the incarnation of *Christ*, without any proper or suitable mediator or undertaker on the part of man. This covenant of the gospel, or of God in *Christ*, includes in the very nature and theory of it two real distinct parties, God and man; so that the title of mediator seems to require that man should be represented by the mediator as well as God, and that the complete person of the mediator should have some affinity to both parties, and actually agree to this covenant in that whole person before the communication of the benefits of it to the earliest ages of mankind.

Observe also, what was intimated before, that this one mediator is particularly called the man *Christ Jesus*, 1 Tim. ii. 5. that the human nature may appear to be signally concerned in the mediation: and for the same reason, the book of life is said to belong to the lamb, which name is applied to the human nature of *Christ*, in union with the divine, with much more propriety than it can be applied merely to the divine nature without such an union.

Argument III. Another argument for this doctrine of the existence of the soul of *Christ* before his incarnation may be derived from the "scriptural descriptions of *Christ*'s coming into the world. This is always expressed in some corporeal language, such as denotes his taking on him animal nature, or body, or flesh, without the least mention of taking a soul." Read the following scriptures; *John* i. 14. "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." *Rom.* i. 3. "He was made of the seed of *David*, according to the flesh." *Rom.* viii. 3. "God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." *Gal* iv. 3. "God sent forth his Son made of a woman." This word cannot necessarily imply the soul, for his soul could not be made of the soul or body of the virgin *Mary*, but his flesh or blood was made out of her's.

*Phil.* ii. 7, 8. "He was made in the likeness of men, and was found in fashion as a man." Now shape or fashion peculiarly refer to the body rather than the soul.

And in the second chapter to the *Hebrews*, where the apostle treats professedly of the incarnation of *Christ*, he seems to suppose that his soul existed before, and that he was like the children of God already in that respect; but verse 14. "For as much as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that he might in all things be made like his brethren," as verse 17. And if he be said to "take on him the seed of *Abraham*," verse 16. yet it is certain that the human body of *Christ* has a very proper and literal right to that name, rather than the soul, though the word seed may more frequently include both.

Again, it is said by the same apostle in *Heb.* v. 7. "In the days of his flesh he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears," that is, when he had taken flesh upon him, and dwelt in it. And *Heb.* x. when God the Father sends his Son into the world, he is said to prepare a body for him, but not a human soul; verse 5. "A body hast thou prepared me."

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The apostle *John* speaks several times of *Jesus Christ's* being come in the flesh, to signify his coming into the world, in his first and second epistles, intimating that the person who is vested with the name and character of *Jesus* and *Christ*, had every thing besides flesh before.

On the other hand, if *Christ* did take a human soul upon him, or the whole complex nature of man, at the same time when he was born of the virgin, it is a wonder that there should not be any one scripture, neither in the old and or new testament, which should give such a hint to us, that he then took a reasonable soul as well as a body? Or should tell us at least that he expressly assumed human nature, which might include both flesh and spirit? but that it should always use such words as chiefly and directly denote the body. This seems to carry some evident intimation that his human soul existed before.

Perhaps it will be objected here, that the word flesh in many places of scripture signifies mankind or human nature, by the figure "synecdoche" including the soul also.

It is granted that flesh doth sometimes signify mankind, and this objection might be good if the scriptural language never used any thing but the word flesh to denote human nature, and never distinguished the flesh and the soul: But since there are a great number of scriptures where the flesh or body is distinguished from the soul or spirit of man on many occasions, it seems very natural and reasonable to expect there should be some one passage at least in all the bible wherein the divine nature of *Christ* should be said to assume a human soul as well as a body or flesh, when he came into our world, if this spirit or soul had no existence before the incarnation.

And we have the more reason to expect this also when we observe, that there is mention made of the soul of *Christ* himself in several places of scripture on other occasions, as *Isa.* liii. 10. "Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." Verse 11. "He shall see of the travel of his soul." *Luke* xxiii. 46. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." *Acts* ii. 31. "His soul was not left in hell." *John* xii. 27. "Now is my soul troubled." *Matth.* xxvi. 38. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful." *Luke* x. 21. "Jesus rejoiced in spirit" *Jo'm* xi. 23. and xiii. 21. "Jesus was troubled in spirit." Now since we have the human soul or spirit of *Christ* mentioned several times in scripture on other occasions, and yet never once mentioned with relation to his incarnation, but always find his coming into our world described by taking flesh and blood, body, the fashion of a man, the likeness of sinful flesh, &c. there is much reason to suppose that *Christ* had a human soul before, and did not then begin to have it.

Argument IV. "Though the jews were much at a loss in our Saviour's time in their sentiments of the *Messiah*, and had very various and confused notions of him, yet it is certain that amongst many of the learned of that nation, and probably amongst many of the vulgar too, there was a tradition of the pre existence of the soul of the *Messiah*." *Philo the jew*, who lived very near the time of our Saviour, interprets several of those scriptures of the old testament concerning the mediator or Logos which we do: He calls him the Son of God, and yet he makes him expressly a man, the prince of the angels, the prophet of God, the light of the people; and though he talks with some confusion on this subject, and gives him some such characters as seem to make this Logos truly divine, and one with God, yet other characters also are such as seem to be inferior to godhead, and very happily agree with this doctrine of the pre existent soul of *Christ* in union with his divine nature, as will plainly appear in what follows.

In



In some parts of his works *Philo* describes the Logos as a particular divine power, *δυναμις*, which he also calls *σοφία*, or wisdom, as *Solomon* does in the eighth of *Proverbs*, and he attributes to this wisdom or word an existence before any creature, the contrivance of the creation of the world and all things in it, with other divine and incommunicable ascriptions. Sometimes the ancient *jews* make it the same with God himself; so the *targums* do, which are *jewish* commentaries upon scripture, when they speak of the *memra* or word, thereby representing either divine powers or properties in a personal manner, or the divine nature itself in a particular manner of agency, relation or subsistence.

In other places *Philo* makes the Logos or Word to signify that glorious arch-angel which the ancient *jews* suppose to be the supreme of creatures, formed before all the angels and all the other parts of the creation, "in whom was the name of God," who was sent to conduct *Moses* and the *jews* into *Canaan*, *Exod.* xxiii. 20. This glorious spirit *Philo* calls: "the most honourable Logos, the arch-angel, prince of the angels and stars, high-priest in this temple of God, the world, who stands in the limits between the creature and the creator, the eldest, the first-begotten of the sons of God, who under God governs the world, and who doth humbly mediate for us mortals with him that is immortal."

The seventy *jewish* interpreters seem to have had some notion that this arch angel was the *Messiah*, when they call the child born, the son given, in *Isai.* ix. 6. *Μεγέλης* *Ουλῆς* *Ἀγγελος*, the angel of the great counsel, even as *Christ* is called an angel, *Isai.* lxiii. 9. *Mal.* iii. 1. *Exod.* xxiii. 20. And it was a general opinion of the ancient *jews* that there was one glorious angel superior to all the rest, by whom God made his visits to the patriarchs, and declared his will to *Abraham*, *Jacob*, *Moses*, *Joshua*, &c.

I confess these ancient *jews* speak variously and with some darkness and confusion on these subjects, that we cannot gather any steady or certain inferences that they generally believed either of these two Logos's to be the very person of their expected *Messiah*: Yet a christian, who has the clearer light of the new testament, may from their writings easily and naturally trace and infer the doctrine of the uncreated Logos, that is, the divine word or wisdom united to the created Logos, that is, the great arch-angel, because these ancient *jews* ascribe to the Logos so many things which are truly divine, and so many things inferior to divinity.

But they speak in some confusion, because they seem not to have had a clear idea of this personal union between God and a creature. Whereas christians being instructed in this doctrine by the the new testament, may clearly understand how by this glorious being, this complex person, viz. our Lord *Jesus Christ*, God created the world, and God governed the affairs of his ancient church: and that standing in the limits betwixt God and the creature, both by his nature as well as his office he becomes the high-priest, and mediates between mortal men and God who is immortal, according to the language of the ancient *jews*.

What I have cited already, discovers the acknowledged sense and opinion of the ancient *jews* both philosophers and commentators on this subject. See much more to this purpose in my dissertation on the Logos or Word of God. pages 553—594.

If we search among other of the *jewish* writers, we may find more intimations of this doctrine.

Bishop *Fowler* cites some notable traditions of the *jewish* rabbies to this purpose; one in an ancient book amongst the *jews* called *Pesikta*, viz. That "after God had created the world, he put his hand under the throne of his glory, and brought out the

the soul of the *Messiah*, with all his attendants, and said unto him, Wilt thou heal and redeem my sons after six thousand years? He answered, I am willing so to do. Again therefore, said God unto him, And art thou willing to suffer chastisements, for the purging away their iniquities? And the soul of the *Messiah* answered, I will suffer them, and that with all my heart."

And there is, saith he, a cabbalistical representation of their expected *Messiah's* being in heaven, in another old book of high esteem among the *jews*, intitled *Mid-rash Conen*, viz. "In the fifth house sits the *Messiah*, Son of *David*; and *Elias* of blessed memory said to this *Messiah*, Bear the stroke and judgment of the Lord, which he inflicts on thee for the sin of *Israel*, as it is written by *Isaiab*, he was wounded because of our transgressions, &c." Now though we allow no more credit to these traditions than to other *jewish* tales, yet it discovers their antient notion of the pre-existence of the soul of the *Messiah*: and the learned Mr. *Fleming* tells us, that it was an inducement to him to favour that opinion, "because the *jews* seemed to have laid down this as an undoubted maxim in all ages, that the soul of the *Messiah* was made before all creatures, as all must own that are in the least acquainted with their opinions and writings. "christology," book III. chapter v. page 457." That this was an antient opinion of the *jews* is confirmed by other writers also.

And it is no wonder if many of the common people as well as the learned had also this notion of the soul of *Christ*, since it appears, *John* ix. 2. that they had a belief of the pre-existence of all human souls, for which opinion I think there is neither in scripture nor in reason any just foundation; nor doth the pre-existence of the soul of *Christ* at all infer the doctrine of the pre-existence of other souls, but rather the contrary, as will appear under the next particular.

Argument V. "Since it pleased the Father to prepare a body for our Lord *Jesus Christ* by the overshadowing of the holy Ghost, and by a peculiar manner of conception, that his body might have some peculiar prerogative, and that he might be the Son of God in a superior sense with regard to his flesh, as *Luke* i. 35. so it is not unreasonable to suppose that the soul of *Christ* also, which was to be united to godhead, should have this peculiar prerogative, to be derived immediately from God before any creature was made, and to enjoy this union with the divine nature, and glories suitable thereto before it's union with an earthly body." And thus in consideration of it's formation before all creatures in a most immediate manner by the will of God, as well as it's nearest resemblance to God himself above all other spirits, this human soul might be called also the Son of God and his only begotten Son, in a transcendent manner above all other beings, whether men or angels, who are sometimes called sons of God. But this thought perhaps will be set in a clearer light, when we come to explain a variety of scriptures according to this hypothesis in the next section; and it may be yet made plainer still, whensoever I shall publish another dissertation which I have written on the name Son of God \*. See page 647—672.

\* This dissertation was never published.



## S E C T I O N. V.

*A confirmation of this doctrine by arguments drawn from the happy consequences, and the various advantages of it.*

**I** Think the reason and considerations mentioned in the two foregoing sections have some weight in them: But the argument will receive new strength if we survey the various advantages that attend this opinion of the pre-existent soul of *Christ*.

Advantage I. "This doctrine casts a surprising light upon many dark passages in the word of God; it does very naturally and easily explain and reconcile several difficult places both of the old and new testament, which are very hard to be accounted for any other way." Some of these I have already mentioned, and I think they appear in a fairer light by the help of this doctrine. Other passages there are which speak of *Christ* as the true God, and yet at the same time in the context attribute such properties and characters to him as are very hard to be reconciled and applied to pure godhead: but are explained with utmost ease to us, and honour to *Christ*, by supposing his pre-existent soul even then united to his divine nature.

Let us survey some of these portions of scripture.

Text I *Col. i. 15—19.* *Christ* is described as the "image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, &c. All things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist; and he is the head of the body the church, the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence, for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, or as it is expressed in the second chapter, verse 9. for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the of the godhead bodily." Here are some expressions which seem too sublime for any mere creature, viz. "All things were created by him and for him, and by him all things consist." But when it is said, "He is the image of the invisible God;" this cannot refer merely to his divine nature, for that is as invisible in the Son as it is in the Father; therefore it seems to refer to his pre-existent soul in union with his godhead, who is the brightest, the fairest and most glorious image of God; and so he appears to the world of angels in heaven, and by his frequent assuming a visible shape heretofore, became the image of the invisible God to men, and dwelt here for a season on earth.

He is said to be "the first-born of every creature." There has been much labour and art of criticism employed to apply these words merely to the divine nature of *Christ*, by giving them a metaphorical or some unusual sense: But if we suppose this soul of *Christ* to exist thus early, then he is properly the first-born of every creature in the literal sense of the words; and in this sense he may be literally called "the beginning of the creation of God," as he styles himself, *Rev. iii. 14.*

If we join the expressions of the first and second chapters to the *Colossians* together, we may explain the one by the other. "He is the image of the invisible God; by him and for him were all things created, and in him all things consist, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence, &c. for it pleased the Father that in him should dwell all the fulness of the godhead bodily." All the godhead dwelt in him as a spirit, or spiritually before the incarnation, and bodily since; thus the nineteenth verse of the first chapter comes in properly as a reason for all those attributions both  
supreme

supreme and inferior, viz. because God was pleased to ordain that the divine nature should be united to this glorious being, the human soul of *Christ*, now appearing in a body.

Doctor *Thomas Goodwin* was a learned, a laborious and a successful enquirer into all those scriptures that treat of our Lord *Jesus Christ* in order to aggrandize his character; and when he interprets these verses in volume II. "of the knowledge of God, &c." he finds himself constrained to explain the expressions concerning the divine nature of *Christ*, as united to man by way of anticipation, or as considered in it's future union with the man *Jesus*, and argues strongly for this exposition: But there is no need to bring in such a figure as "prolepsis" or the anticipation of things future, since the real and actual existence of the soul of *Christ* before the creation makes all this language of scripture just and plain in the literal sense. And what that pious and ingenious author declares upon this subject almost persuades me to believe that had he lived in our day, he would have been a hearty defender of the doctrine which I propose.

Text II. The next scripture I shall cite for this purpose is that illustrious description of our Lord *Jesus* in the first chapter of the epistle to the *Hebrews*, wherein there are sufficient evidences of his divine nature: but there are some such expressions as seem to imply also a nature inferior and dependent. He is represented as "laying the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of his hands; he upholds all things by the word of his power:" which expressions carry in them an idea too sublime for any mere created nature. And the citation of the first of them from the hundred and second *Psalms*, proves yet farther that *Christ* is *Jehovah* the Creator.

But when he is called a Son, a begotten Son, this seems to imply derivation and dependency: and perhaps the sonship of *Christ*, and his being the only begotten of the Father, may be better explained by attributing it to his human soul existing by some peculiar and immediate manner of creation, formation, or derivation from the Father before other creatures were formed; especially if we include in the same idea of sonship, as doctor *Goodwin* does, his union to the divine nature, and if we add also his exaltation to the office of the *Messiah* as king and Lord of all; which some zealous trinitarians suppose to be the chief thing meant when God saith, verse 5. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

Now this matter being set in a fair and full light, and established by just arguments from scripture, would take off the force of many *arian* pretences against the trinity, viz. such pretences as arise from the supposed derivation of one person from another in pure godhead, and a supposed eternal act of generation producing a co-essential son, which things are not plainly expressed in any part of the bible, and which are acknowledged on all sides to be great and incomprehensible difficulties.

*Heb. i. 3.* Perhaps these words, "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person," may be better explained, if we suppose the divine nature of *Christ* to be united to his pre-existent soul, when it was first created: This human soul of *Christ* was then like a glass through which the godhead shone with inimitable splendor in all the perfections of it, wisdom, power, holiness and goodness: thus *Christ* was his Father's most perfect image, or copy, both in his own native excellencies, bearing the nearest resemblance to God, as an only begotten Son, and he was also the brightness of his glory; because the perfections of the Father shone through him with more illustrious rays than it was possible for any mere creature to represent or transmit them, who was not thus united to a divine nature.



I cannot forbear to illustrate this by a similitude which I think has been somewhere used by doctor Goodwin: Suppose it possible for a hollow globe of crystal to be made so vast as to inclose the sun; this globe of crystal considered in itself, would have many properties in it, perhaps, resembling the sun in a more perfect manner than any other being: but if it were also inhabited by the sun itself, and thus transmitted the glories of the sun to men, how express an image would it be of that bright luminary, and would it not be the most happy medium by which the sun could exert it's powers of light and heat? Such is *Jesus* the man, who is the Son of God inhabited by the divine nature, and the fairest image of God.

Besides, let it be yet further considered, that when *Christ* is called in *Colossians* i. "15. the image of the invisible God," and in *Heb.* i. 3. "the express image of his Father's person," it must be understood either of his divine nature or his human. If it be understood of his divine nature, it must mean that he is the image of the Father's essence or of his personality, for the personality together with the essence, make up the complete character of God the Father.

But the divine nature of *Christ* cannot properly be the image of his Father's nature or essence; for the essence of godhead, or the divine nature both in the Father and in the Son, is one and the same individual nature or essence, which cannot properly be the image of itself, nor can the same individual essence be both the original and the image at the same time. When we conceive of the self-same body, or the self-same man, or the self-same angel, in different positions or situations, circumstances, relations or appearances, we never say that the self-same thing is the image of itself. Thus *Christ* in his divine essence cannot be the image of the Father's essence, when it is the same individual essence with that of the Father. The essence of God in the person of the Son cannot properly be the image of that essence in the person of the Father, since it is the same individual essence.

Nor is *Christ* in his divine nature an express image of the personality of the Father. Sonship is no image of paternity: A derived property or subsistence is no image of an underived property or subsistence, but just the reverse or directly contrary to it.

Since therefore *Christ* in his divine nature is neither the image of his Father's essence, nor of his Father's personality, these words must be spoken with regard to *Christ*'s human nature; and in this respect he is the express image of his Father, or the image of the invisible God; and that, these three ways.

1. As the human soul of *Christ* is a creature, which has the nearest likeness to it's Creator. This Son of God is a most glorious spirit, the brightest and nearest image to the Father, the eternal glorious spirit; far nearer than the angels who are also the sons of God, or than *Adam* who was the son of God too; for his properties and perfections are much greater than their's, and bear a much nearer resemblance to the properties and perfections of God the Father.

2. The human nature of *Christ* is the image of the invisible God the Father, as he often assumed a visible form under the old testament, and appeared and spake, and acted as God in a visible glory; and so he is the proper "image of the invisible God," *Col.* i. 15.

3. As he took upon him, in the fulness of time, a visible body of flesh and blood, and therein appeared as one in whom the fulness of the godhead dwelt bodily, the visible image of his invisible Father.

But I proceed. The holy writer in *Heb.* ii. 3. adds further, that "he was appointed heir of all things," which seems to be not so applicable to the pure godhead of *Christ*;

*Christ*; for godhead has an original and eternal right to all things, and does not come at it by way of inheritance or derivation, much less by being an appointed heir. Doctor Goodwin is so well persuaded of the sense of these words, that they are not properly applicable to pure godhead, that he again supposes the holy writer to speak by way of anticipation, and to view the divine nature of *Christ* in union with the man, though he acknowledges the things which are now spoken of, were transacted before the world was.

There are other expressions in this chapter which seem to refer to some being inferior to godhead. Verse 4. "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." Verse 9. "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows;" that is, has given thee the holy Spirit as a comforter, in a superior measure. These things cannot be supposed to be spoken of the godhead of *Christ*: And yet they seem to be spoken concerning *Christ* before his incarnation, and then they point out to us the pre-existence of his human soul: Whereas if they are spoken of him after his incarnation, then they prove nothing of his pre-existent glory, which seems to be the design of this chapter.

Since the design of the second chapter to the *Hebrews* is, to prove the incarnation of *Christ*, and his taking upon him a human body, I might here ask, whether the design of the first chapter may not be to represent our blessed Lord in his pre-existent state, both divine and human, that is, to set forth the glory of this human spirit both in it's own excellencies and in it's original union with the divine nature. And this appears the more probable, because the author in the first chapter is frequently comparing him with angels, and sets him above them in several comparisons; now this would be but a low and diminutive account of the godhead of *Christ*, to raise him above angels; but it is a glorious and sublime account of his human soul, considered as united to godhead, and one with God.

And since there are so many expressions in the first chapter which ascribe ideas to *Christ* which are inferior to godhead, as well as some sublimer expressions which appear incommunicable to any but God; I would enquire whether the introduction of this pre-existent soul of *Christ* here may not be a happy clue to lead us into the very mind and meaning of this portion of scripture, rather than to suppose the godhead of *Christ* is always intended here: For by so doing we embarrass ourselves with this difficulty, which the *arians* frequently sling upon us, of attributing something derivative and dependent to the divine nature, and ascribing something too low and mean to the godhead of *Christ*.

I might add also in confirmation of this thought, that had the sacred writers only design been to prove the divine nature of *Christ*, there are several passages in the old testament which are of equal force and significance with any which he has cited, and which are more evidently applied to the *Messiah* by the prophets themselves: But if we suppose him to speak of the whole pre-existent glory of *Christ*, then the citations seem to be well chosen and well mingled to represent his two natures, both divine and human, and the glory of his sacred person resulting thence.

That noble expounder on the epistle to the *Hebrews*, doctor Owen, being sensible that all these expressions in this chapter can never be applied to the divine nature of *Christ*, asserts, that, "it is not the direct and immediate design of the apostle in this place to treat absolutely of either nature of *Christ*, either divine or human, but only of his person: And though some things here expressed belong to his divine nature, some to



his human; yet none of them are spoken as such, but are all considered as belonging to his person." See his "exposition on the *Hebrews*, verse 3. page 52." So that I have those two excellent writers doctor *Goodwin* and doctor *Owen* concurring with me in this sentiment, that it is not the prime design of this first chapter to the *Hebrews* to prove the deity of *Christ*, but the glory of his person considered as God-man: And in this view several expressions of the apostle are most appositely adapted to represent the glory of the human soul of *Christ* in it's pre-existent state, and in it's union to the divine nature.

Text III. Another difficult scripture which is made more easy and plain by this doctrine, is the eighth of *Proverbs*, verse 22. &c. where wisdom is represented as brought forth, and dwelling with God before the world was. May not this be happily attributed to *Christ*'s pre-existent soul united to the divine nature, or the person of the mediator God-man? For it is said, "the Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old: I was set up from everlasting: Before the hills was I brought forth: I was by him, and was daily his delight." These words admit of two or three remarks.

1. These expressions, "I was possessed or acquired, I was set up, I was brought forth," seem to express and imply something inferior to pure godhead, which is undervived and independent; yet it seems to be the proper description of a being distinct from God the Father in the literal sense\*, for these words intimate so much, "I was by him as one brought up with him, I was daily his delight, I rejoiced before him, and my delights were with the sons of men." If these things be taken literally, they mean a real person inferior and distinct from God.

2. The original *hebrew* does not say, "the Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, but קנני acquired or assumed or possessed me: the beginning of his ways," not ברשית but רשית which gives a fair ground for this interpretation, viz. that the divine nature acquired, assumed or possessed himself of the human soul of *Christ* as the beginning, head and foundation of all his works and ways, both of creation and providence: So *Rev.* iii. 14. *Christ* is called the beginning or head of the creation of God.

Mr. *Fleming* citing these verses at large, "christology book III. chapter v. page 469." adds, "What we render in verse 24. and 25. brought forth, the *targum* renders, by being born in the first verse, and by being created, in the next. But the *hebrew* word is the same in both, and is justly rendered by *Arias Montanos*, "formata;" that is, framed, formed or made: As the *septuagint* to the same purpose renders it by νομισαι, which is of the same import. And what else can he mean, when in verse 30 he represents himself, as one brought up with God, or as the *targum* says, "as one nourished up at his side?" Surely, if this be meant of the first created spirit, who is now the soul of the *Messiah*, no expressions can be more plain as well as natural: Whereas if we understand them immediately of the *Logos*, as the second person of the trinity, we must get over abundance of figures, that can never, I think,

\* I readily grant the divine wisdom may be here represented, after the manner of the eastern writers, as the counsel, contrivance and the decretive power or will of God in a personal character, as being present with God in the creation of the world, and as produced or brought forth by him; But even this wisdom may be supposed to make the pre-existent soul of *Christ* in some unknown manner, it's instrument of operation, as doctor *Goodwin* uses the word, and when the sacred writer adds, "I rejoiced daily before him in the habitable parts of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men;" this seems to cast a stronger aspect upon some real proper person distinct from godhead.

I think, be properly either explained or accommodated; besides our being involved in endless criticisms about words."

Doctor *Goodwin* also is positive that these expressions cannot refer to the second person considered in his eternal generation, but they must be referred to *Christ* as God-man, because they denote an act of the divine will. "*Goodwin* of the knowledge of God, volume II. page 111, and 189."

The learned doctor *Knight* supposes this birth of divine wisdom is her coming forth into a human figure and subsistence, or her entrance into the substance of the first created nature, that is, the human soul of *Jesus Christ*, at the moment of it's creation. By this means the Word as man became the head of mankind, who were to be made by him after his image and likeness; and as the first-begotten, he had the right of primogeniture or government over the rest.—See his "considerations on Mr. *Whiston*, &c. pages 108, 109, &c."

3. I remark also, that though the *hebrew* language may express the eternity of God, by saying, "Before the mountains and the hills, &c." yet since we suppose the soul of *Christ* to be the first of the works or ways of God, this manner of expression may more particularly and expressly describe the date of his existence before this world was made, though it be not co-eval and co-eternal with the godhead.

But I proceed,

4. To mention some other difficult texts which may derive light from this doctrine.

If we can but suffer ourselves to believe what I have intimated before, that the sonship of *Christ* does not belong to his divine nature, but rather to his human soul considered in it's original derivation from God the Father, and in it's being appointed to the sacred office of the *Messiah*; then we have a most evident and obvious interpretation of those scriptures in the new testament, which have been attended with so much darkness and difficulty, and have given so much anxiety and pains to our divines, viz. *John* v. 19. "The Son can do nothing of himself." *Matt.* xxiv. 36. *Mark* xiii. 32. "But of that day knoweth no man, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father." *Heb.* v. 8. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." Now this sonship refers to verse 5. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." *1 Cor.* xv. 28. "Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." These expressions sound very harsh if applied to the divine nature of *Christ*, but are very naturally applicable to a being or spirit inferior to godhead.

To these expressions I might add, *John* xiv. 28. "The Father is greater than I;" which is very hard to apply to the divine nature of *Christ*, and to make a greater and lesser God: And yet it seems but a poor low assertion if our Saviour spoke of it himself as a mere common man, who begun to exist thirty-four years ago: It was no strange thing that God should be greater than a man. But if we suppose it refers to *Christ*'s glorious human soul, which was the first-born of every creature, it carries in it something grand and august, and he pays hereby a sublimer honour to God his Father.

All other places of scripture wherein the Son of God is represented, either as receiving or invested with sublime powers from God, or as bearing any inferior characters, have a most natural and easy explication if they are applied to this glorious human spirit sometimes considered as distinguished from the divine nature, sometimes as personally united to it, and that either in it's own existence before it's incarnation, or in it's incarnate state, according as the context requires: For since both natures have



have their part and share in man's redemption, they are thus distinguished in the holy scripture, some expressions relating more properly to the one nature, some to the other, and some including both natures united. There is no need of paraphrasing these scriptures at large, and giving an example how these texts may then be interpreted, since this key being given, the way lies open for every unlearned christian to penetrate into the sense of them, and to explain many other scriptures besides those I have cited, by the help of the same doctrine.

Advantage II. "This doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul of *Christ* not only explains dark and difficult scriptures, but it discovers to us many beauties and proprieties of expression in the word of God, and casts a lustre upon some of those passages whose justness and beauty were not before observed." Let me mention a few of them.

1. When man is said to be "created in the image of God," *Gen. i. 27.* it may refer to the God-man, to *Christ* in his pre-existent state. God says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;" the word is redoubled perhaps to intimate that *Adam* was made in the likeness of the human soul of *Christ*, who was the first of God's creation, as well as that he bore something of the image or resemblance of the divine nature itself: And hereby *Christ* has the honour of being set up as the first and fairest image of God, and the grand pattern of all human souls who were to bear his likeness.

2. Again, when God is said to grieve, to repent, to be angry, to come down from heaven, to stand, to speak, to receive and assume to himself many of the actions and passions of human nature, we are wont to explain them as mere figures of speech, employing human expressions to represent divine actions: But if we suppose the divine nature of *Christ* united to this pre-existent soul, then these expressions perhaps may be taken in a more literal sense than we imagined; when he that was true God, by virtue of this union, came down from heaven, stood, spake, grieved, rejoiced, and was pleased or angry at the view he took of the affairs of men. Doctor *Owen* in "his meditations on the glory of *Christ*" asserts, that "it had been absurd to bring in God under perpetual anthropopathies, as grieving, repenting, being angry, well pleased, and the like, were it not but that the divine person intended was to take on him the nature wherein such affections do dwell."

3. And not only human actions are attributed to God, but even the very name of man is given to that glorious being which visited the patriarchs of old: He assumed a human shape, and appeared as a man; and even the soul itself might be so called by "Synecdoche," which puts a part for the whole. And yet this glorious appearance is also called God, and the Lord or *Yehovah*. "It was a man that wrestled with *Jacob*," *Gen. xxxi. 24.* and yet he is acknowledged and adored as God. That extraordinary man, who is called "the man of God," when he appeared to *Manoab*, *Judges xiii.* is supposed to be the *Messiah*: His countenance is described "like an angel of God," and his name is called "secret or wonderful," verse 6, 18 \*. so in *Ezekiel's* vision, chapter i. 26. "upon the likeness of the throne was the appearance of a man above:" And in the prophecy of *Daniel* we meet with several of his appearances in the form of a man: Chapter iii. 25. "The fourth man walking in the midst of the burning fiery furnace was like the Son of God." So, chapter viii. verse 15, 16. "There stood before me as the appearance of a man," and this man bid *Gabriel* make *Daniel* understand

\* It is the same word נִסְתָּר wonderful, which is attributed to *Christ* as one of his names, in *Isai. lx. 6.* which the angel here assumes when *Manoab* asks his name.

stand the vision: And chapter x. 5. "A certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with gold," is described very nearly in the same form and dress as *Christ* appeared in to St. *John*, Rev. i. 13. and chapter vii. 13. "One like the son of man came to him that sat on the throne, &c." which is parallel to Rev. i. 7. It is possible that most times when the angel, who is also called God, favoured the patriarchs with a visit, he appeared in the form of a man. thus the great "*Theanthropos*," or God-man, put on a human shape frequently as a prelude, figure and prophecy of his own incarnation.

Nor can it be objected here that a human soul is not a man; for surely it may be called a man as well as *Christ* may be called an angel, as he is often in scripture; and better than the pure divine nature may be called a man; which yet is the sense of those who will not allow *Christ*'s human soul to be here meant. The soul is the chief part of the man, and St. *Paul* calls his own soul by this name, viz. a man. See 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3. "I knew a man, that is, his soul, whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell."

4. Another instance of the justness and beauty of scriptural language we find in Zech. xiii. 7. where the man *Christ* is called the neighbour of God, or the man who is near to him, as it may be rendered; "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow or neighbour, saith the Lord of hosts." The word עֵמֶת which we render my fellow does never signify any sort of equality, but conjunction, nearness or neighbourhood: It is often rendered neighbour in scripture. It denotes the man that was with God, or near to God, by the intimate union of the human soul to the godhead, and was the shepherd of the flock of God, or the keeper of *Israel* in all former ages. So the vulgar *latin* renders it, "*co-hærentem mihi*," cleaving to me; and because of the union between the divine and human nature it may be very properly expressed, "*my neighbour*."

I might take occasion here to remark also how appositely God himself is sometimes called the "*shepherd of Israel*," Psal. xxiii. 1. Psal. lxxx. 1. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs in his arm, and carry them in his bosom," Isai. xl. 11. which is a prophecy of *Christ*, though he is called the Lord God in the foregoing verse. This language has great propriety in it when we consider the human soul of *Christ* united to godhead, acting the part of a shepherd towards the *jewish* nation, "*leading them through the wilderness like a flock*," and watching over them as a shepherd in the land of *Canaan*. How beautiful is this idea, when we observe that both in prophecy and in history, in the old testament and in the new, this office is appropriated to *Christ*, Ezech. xxxiv. 23. "I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant *David*." John x. 14. *Jesus* calls himself "*the good shepherd*;" and St. *Peter* echoes to the voice of *Christ*, and calls him "*the chief shepherd, and the bishop of souls*," 1 Pet. ii. 25. and v. 4.

This seems to carry something of evidence with it, that the human soul of *Christ* had an existence before; and therefore the scripture was careful to use human language, to express his offices as well as his person and actions. This will further appear by what follows.

5. This doctrine of the pre-existence of the human soul of *Christ* affords us a plain reason, why he is called *Christ* or the *Messiah*, in those many places of scripture which represent transactions before his incarnation, to shew that this very person was anointed to his offices of old. So in 1 Cor. x. 9. "Neither let us tempt *Christ* as some of them, that is, *Israelites*, tempted him, and were destroyed." Eph. iii. 9. "God created



created all things by Jesus Christ." 2 Tim. i. 9. "Grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 1 Pet. i. 11. "Searching what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in the prophets, did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ." 1 Pet. iii. 19. "By which also he, that is Christ, went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which were disobedient in the days of Noah." Heb. xi. 26. "Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." The word Christ, which is the same with Messiah or anointed, implies a complexion of the divine and human nature; at least it seems to import his human nature in an especial manner; for "there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. ii. 5. The manhood is eminently represented in the person of the mediator, though the godhead being united, rendered all his actions infinitely efficacious and powerful.

6. It presents us also with a fair and rational account why God himself was called the king of Israel, and took upon him the political government of that peculiar nation; and we learn why the Messiah had also this title given him, "the king of the jews," when we consider the pre-existent soul of the Messiah personally united to the divine nature. That God was often called the king of Israel, is sufficiently manifest in many places. 1 Sam. xii. 12. Samuel reproved them when they wanted another king to reign over them, "while the Lord their God was their king." David and Isaiah often called God the "Creator of Israel and their king, the redeemer of Jacob and his king, the holy one of Israel and his king," Psal. lxxxix. 18. Isa. xli. 21. Isa. xliii. 15. And in the vision of Isaiah, chapter vi. verse 5. the prophet says, — "My eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts," which is properly applied to Christ by John the evangelist, chapter xii. verse 41. He is called the "King of glory," Psal. xxiv. 7, 9, 10. When the ark was brought up to Zion, he is intitled the "King of Zion," Zech. ix. 9. which is attributed to Christ, John xii. 25. and the common name of the Messiah was the "king of Israel," John i. 49. Nathanael saith to Christ, "Thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel." All these expressions are very natural, and just, and proper when we consider the soul of Christ in it's pre-existent state united to the divine nature, and becoming a patron and protector of the holy seed, assuming the jews above any other nation, into a peculiar relation to himself. And upon this account is said in John i. 11. "He came to his own, *eis ta idia*," to his own property or possession, to his own people the jews; but the jews his own subjects received him not.

Now if we suppose the soul of our blessed redeemer in union with his godhead to be the appointed or anointed king of the jewish church and nation, through all the ages of that oeconomy, and if we consider that when he took flesh upon him and came down to dwell in the midst of them, according to the prophecies of the old testament, he was renounced, disowned, scorned, reproached, scourged and crucified by his rebellious subjects; and when we remember that all these sorrows were sustained in obedience to the will of his heavenly Father, and in compassion to sinful man; how just and meritorious a foundation does this lay for his exaltation to a greater and more extensive kingdom, even to be raised to the government of all churches and all nations? He was king of the jews for many ages before he came in the flesh; and when he rose from the dead, he became "king of the gentiles, and Lord of all things in heaven and earth," as a reward of his sufferings, Phil. ii. 8 — 11. God at first "set his king of Israel on his holy hill of Zion," Psal. ii. 6. and when he had declared him to be his Son at his resurrection, he says, "Ask of me and I will give thee, &c." So at his request he "gave him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost ends of

of the earth for his possession," *Psal.* ii. 8. He was of old the king of *Jacob*, and when he had "washed us from our sins in his own blood, and became the first-begotten from the dead, he had then a new name given him, king of kings, and Lord of lords, and prince of the kings of the earth;" see *Rev.* i. 5. and xix. 16. And though some of these titles are divine, and belong to the divine nature of *Christ* originally, yet here they are ascribed to him as God manifest in the flesh, or as a man united to God; nor are they too high for that whole person who was God as well as man. Besides, when his human nature had suffered, it was then exalted to a greater participation of, or a nearer resemblance to divine honours than before.

Let us dwell a little longer on this sacred subject, the enlargement of the kingdom of *Christ*.

Is there not some ground from scripture to believe that the great God governs the world by the intervening agency and ministration of good and evil angels? As his Son *Jesus Christ* was king of the *Jews*, so the good angels were specially employed under *Christ* to do good offices for his people. And may we not suppose that the gentile countries, those sinful nations of the earth, were distributed by divine providence under the dominion or government of several evil angels in the times of God's ancient dispensation before the coming of *Christ*? Is there not reason to think that the heathen nations for their abominable iniquities might be so far judicially abandoned of God, as to be left very much under the dominion, possession and power of evil angels, since they "sacrificed to devils," *Deut.* xxxii. 17. *1 Cor.* x. 20. "and chose devils for their gods?" *Belzebub* is the known god of *Ekron*," *2 Kings* i. 2. 3. "who is called the prince of devils," *Matth.* xii. 24. And other names of the gods of the gentiles are probably the names that several devils might assume to themselves, and teach the gentiles to worship them under those names. And since *Satan* is called the "god of this world," *2 Cor.* iv. 4. that is, the being whom the heathen world worshipped, and since he is called the "prince of this world," *John* xii. 31. and xiv. 30. that is, he whom the heathen and sinful part of mankind obeyed, may not "evil angels be those principalities and powers, those spiritual wickednesses in high places," *Eph.* vi. 12. who are the "rulers of the darkness of this world," that is, of the dark and miserable heathen world?

Do not the princes of *Persia* and *Græcia* seem to be such evil angels, *Dan.* x. 13? For the prince of *Persia* withstood that glorious person, whom I take to be the angel *Gabriel* who talked with *Daniel* for one and twenty days, when *Michael* the arch-angel helped him. And when this glorious person returned from *Daniel*, "he went to fight with the prince of *Persia*," verse 20. therefore the prince of *Persia* could not be a good angel. And it appears yet further, that all these angel-princes of the nations were evil angels, because none of them held with this glorious person, that is, with *Gabriel*, none besides *Michael* your prince, that is, the angel governor of *Israel*.

Though the heathen nations were left under the dominion of evil angels, yet since *Israel* was God's peculiar people, may we not reasonably suppose God set a good angel over them to be a prince, even his own Son in his pre-existent nature, who was "the angel of the covenant," *Mal.* iii. 1. and the "angel of God's presence," *Isa.* lxiii. 9. and the "angel in whom his name was," *Exod.* xxiii. 25; And may not *Christ* himself be this *Michael* the arch-angel, the prince of *Israel*? It has been observed by some writers, that the scripture never speaks of arch angels in the plural number: Perhaps there is but one arch-angel, and that is *Christ*.



Observe further, that *Christ's* kingdom is directly opposite to the devil's kingdom. His grand design is to oppose and destroy the work and power of the devil: and this seems to be *Michael's* appointed work in scripture, for he is sometimes brought in as "contending with devils," *Jude* verse 9. *Rev.* xii. and as he has other angels under him to "fight against the dragon or devil," verse 7. so has *Christ*. And as he is called the prince of *Daniel's* people, *Dan.* x. 21. that is, the prince or king of *Israel*; so is *Christ*. Observe also, that *Michael* is called one, or rather the first of the chief princes, as it is in the margin, *Dan.* x. 13. which is very agreeable to the character of *Christ*, who is the first and supreme angel-governor, and the prince of *Israel*, who were God's own kingdom or people \*.

Now in this view of things, when we consider our blessed Lord as having his dominion extended from sea to sea, and reigning over the gentile nations even to the ends of the earth since his ascension to heaven, may we not justly suppose this is one part of his exaltation, that by him the prince of this world should be cast out, that is, turned out and despoiled of his old dominion among the nations, as well as out of the souls of men, according to *John* xii. 31? And that all these evil angels, who by divine permission were formerly governors of heathen kingdoms, were then captivated, spoiled and dispossessed of their government, and made slaves to the sovereign will of *Christ*? Is there not reason to conceive that these are those "principalities and powers which he spoiled of their dominions, and made a shew of them openly to the invisible world, triumphing over them," *Col.* ii. 15†. Is not this the "captivity which he led captive, when he ascended on high far above all heavens, that he might fill all things," that is, with his influence, and so might govern all nations, *Eph.* iv. 8, 10? Is it not upon this account that he is described in that magnificence of glory by the prophet *David*, *Psal.* lxxviii. 17, 18. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels. The Lord is among them as in *Sinai*, in his holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men, even for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Was not this the day of his triumph over *Satan* and his angels, who had been gods and kings, princes and lords || of the nations, when thousands of holy angels

\* Some think the glorious person who appeared and talked with *Daniel*, chapter x. 5. was not *Gabriel* but *Jesus Christ*, because he is described much in the same manner as *Christ* is described, *Rev.* i. 13—16. in his appearance to *John*: and if so, then *Michael* cannot be *Christ*, but must be his prime minister in the government of *Israel*. But by comparison of these chapters, it is plain that this glorious person may much better be supposed to be *Gabriel* who conversed with *Daniel*, chapter ix. 21. and who is there called "the man *Gabriel* whom he had seen in the vision at the beginning," which probably refers to the vision of the man *Gabriel* in *Dan.* viii. 15. and then *Michael* the arch-angel must be *Christ* the king or prince of *Israel*.

† See the exposition of this text in the most and the best of our commentators: there is scarce any thing they say upon it but is very consistent with the sense I give it in this place, and with the scheme of my discourse.

I confess Mr. *Peirce* supposes these "principalities and powers" must mean good angels, whom he believes to have been governors of the gentile nations till *Christ's* time: and the chief reason he gives for it is, that the *Colossians* are forbid to worship them, verse 18. for they are dispossessed of their government by the exaltation of *Christ*: whereas had they been evil angels or devils, there would have been no need of forbidding the christian *Colossians* to worship them.

To this I answer, That these *Colossians* were but young converts, and might not know that these were evil spirits whom they were tempted to worship, but only some invisible powers by whom God governed the nations in former times. And let it be observed too, that the apostle in the course of his argument excludes all angels from worship, verses 10, and 18, 19. and not merely evil angels, verse 15.

|| The heathen idols, or devils whom they worshipped, had such names as signify their dominion; *Baal* and *Bel* denote a lord, *Moloch* denotes a king, *Adrammelech* and *Anammelech* denote kings, &c.

angels are represented as the chariots of God attending him in that solemnity? Then he led captive a great captivity, even those principalities and powers that had been the rulers of the darkness of the heathen world: then he received gifts for men, and that not only for his antient subjects the *jews*, but for the rebellious gentiles also, who had been the subjects of *Satan*, under the power of the devil, led captive by him at his pleasure. And the *Psalmist* says it was all done with this design, that the Lord might dwell among them, that is, that the heathens might become the people, the kingdom, the habitation and sanctuary of God, as the nation of the *jews* had been before; that *Christ* who is God-man, and who was king of the saints or the holy nation of *Israel*, might become king of all nations.

Now what a glorious scene of things opens itself to us by this interpretation of a few scriptures? How naturally and how easily do all things co-incide and lead us to this amazing prospect of the victory of *Christ* over the devil? How illustrious does he appear in this dispossession of evil angels of their dominions on earth, at least so far as to make them become his slaves, and act peculiarly by his permission? How magnificent does this doctrine represent the ascension and exaltation of our blessed Saviour? And how gloriously does the God-man *Christ Jesus*, who in ancient ages was the king of *Israel*, aggrandize and extend his present title and dominion as king of nations, and Lord of all, since his death and ascension to heaven?

7. This opinion of the pre-existent soul of *Christ* is made use of by doctor *Knight*, in his "Primitive christianity vindicated against Mr. *Whiston*," page 85. to explain those reproofs given to *Job* by *Eliphaz*, *Job* xv. 7. "Art thou the first man that was born? Wast thou made before the hills? Hast thou heard the secret of God? And dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?" Let us consider each of these four sentences distinctly.

"Art thou the first man that was born?" *Μὴ πρῶτος ἀνθρώπων γενεῖς*; Wast thou born the first of men?" as it is in the septuagint. Art thou that primitive spirit, "the first-born of the creation?" *Col.* i. 15.

"Wast thou made before the hills?" *Adam* was formed after the hills, but this first man the *Messiah*, speaking of himself in the person of wisdom, says, "Before the hills was I born, or brought forth," *Prov.* viii. 25. which in the *hebrew* are the very words of *Job* applied to the first man with only a change of the second to the first person: The first man then and the divine wisdom, or *Messiah*, are all one, that is, by the personal union of this first man to the divine word or wisdom.

"Hast thou heard the secret of God?" The septuagint add to it, "Did God use thee as a counsellor?" But the *Messiah* by way of eminence is called the counsellor, *Isai.* ix. 6. in the septuagint, "the angel of the great counsel;" and perhaps it is he to whom God said, "Let us make man," *Gen.* i. 26.

"And dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?" Does all divine wisdom dwell in thee? It is only in the *Messiah* in the person of *Christ* "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," *Col.* ii. 3. From these interrogatories put to *Job*, doctor *Knight* infers, that the ancients had a notion of such a wonderful being, such a glorious and first-created human spirit. As for myself, I dare not say, this interpretation carries full and sufficient conviction with it; yet both the sacred pen-men of this book, as well as the seventy *jewish* interpreters, in this passage may be fairly explained in this manner, and cast no unfavourable aspect on the pre-existence of the soul of *Christ*.

8. This doctrine in the judgment of some great authors gives us a fair idea of those passages of scripture wherein God is said "to create all things by *Jesus Christ*,"



*Ephes.* iii. 9. not merely by his divine nature, but by him considered as God-man, and called by the names *Jesus* and *Christ*. This I confess has something so sublime in it, that I dare not indulge my own thoughts too far on this subject. Creation is a divine work, and the scripture always describes it as the prerogative of God to create. Nor can I believe that the real and proper power of forming any thing out of nothing is less than infinite, or that it can be communicated to any creature whatsoever. The light of nature and scripture fully agree in making this work an incommunicable prerogative of godhead: Nor can I persuade myself that God would give so much as a shadow of this glory to a mere creature who was not personally united to God, and thereby became one with God, lest it should too much intrench upon those divine titles, prerogatives and operations, whereby he distinguishes himself from his creatures. And upon this account I think it is a good proof that *Christ* is God, because the scripture joins him with the Father in the work of creation.

Yet there may be some proprieties and condecencies in it, that when this first-created spirit or soul of *Christ* was framed, and united to the divine nature, he should not be a mere idle or unactive spectator of the first works of God. But I chuse to represent this matter here no further in my own language, but propose it as it is represented by two great divines, doctor *Thomas Goodwin* and Mr. *Robert Fleming*.

Doctor *Goodwin* in his treatise of the "knowledge of God, page 177." asserts, That all things were created by *Christ*, "he having been some way the instrument, as he is *Christ* God-man, anointed, of the creation as well as, actually, of redemption." And though the doctor supposes the human nature to be then united to the godhead only in decree, yet he says concerning *Christ*, page 178. "If he were at all to be made a creature, it was his due personal privilege to have been first himself made, and himself to have been God's instrument in creation, and to have uttered those words which were spoken by God, "Let there be light:" But for other ends it was suspended." The same author makes it the title of chapter XI. page 180. "That *Christ* as God-man is the creator of all things, proved by scripture, viz, *1 Cor.* viii. 6. by whom are all things. *John* i. 1, 2, 3. "All things were made by him, and without him was nothing made that was made." That the Logos or Word connotes the person sustaining before God the personage of God-man, by whom, as such, all things were created." And he interprets the eighth of *Proverbs* to the same sense.

If it be enquired, How it is possible that the human nature of *Christ*, even though it be united to the godhead, can have any thing to do in the work of creation, I might give an answer to it out of this author's own words, page 178. that is, *Christ* might utter those words, "Let there be light;" and as God's word and instrument might create all things, as he wrought miracles here on earth. Now to speak that word, "Let there be light," which the almighty power of God attended with divine efficacy, was a most illustrious honour put upon the human nature or soul of *Christ*; but surely it is not above the power of a creature to speak such a word.

It may be objected, "That no words could be spoken when there was no air to form the sound of a voice;" therefore in the description of *Moses* this language is metaphorical, and signifies the act of the will, or a volition that there should be light.

But as the doctor explains *Christ*'s instrumentality in the creation of the world by his way of working miracles, this may as well be applied to a volition of the soul,

as to a word of the tongue. We may suppose his human spirit might as well will there should be light, as when he cleansed the leper, *Matth. viii. 3.* he said, "I will, be thou clean." As in that miracle the human soul put forth this volition and the divine power performed the cure, so in the creation this same glorious spirit might have this honour put on it, as to exert such a volition concerning the several creatures, and the almighty power or godhead united to it seconded this volition with it's own creative efficacy.

Though the will of this human soul might have no more real influence in causing creatures to exist than the tongue of *Jesus* had in curing the leper, yet God may be said to "create all things by *Jesus Christ*, even as he wrought miracles by him; and *Jesus Christ* himself also may be properly called the creator, in as much as the divine nature, being personally united to the human soul, performed this work. Now the godhead cannot be said to give away any of it's own incommunicable prerogatives to a mere creature by any sublime expressions of this kind, which attribute the creation to *Christ*, because the soul of *Christ* is not a mere creature; for by it's near and intimate union to the divine nature, it becomes one with God: which honour is not given to any creature whatsoever, but to the man *Christ Jesus*.

This representation of things perhaps may prevent the surprising and offensive ideas which doctor *Goodwin's* expressions may raise on a sudden in the minds of those who are affrighted at every sound they have not been accustomed to hear.

Now surely if *Christ* considered as God-man by way of anticipation, or in the decree of God, be vested with this due dignity, and thus employed in creation, it can never be supposed that the actual existence of his human spirit, at that time in union with his godhead, should impair or diminish the dueness of this privilege: and I am well assured, there is much more evidence in scripture that his soul was actually the "first-born of the creation," than there is that it was to have been so, and that this right was suspended four thousand years, which is doctor *Goodwin's* sense of the matter.

Mr. *Fleming* in his "christology," book III. chap. v. page 451. humbly supposes that the second person of the trinity was from all eternity pitched upon to be the grand organ of all the divine operations, "ad extra:" But since the second person is equally infinite as the Father and holy Spirit, it is inconceivable that he should be the immediate organ of the production of finite beings, any more than the other persons: Therefore a creature was formed that should have as much of divinity as was possible to be imparted to it; and since the very notion of a creature includes imperfection when compared with the creator, therefore this creature was personally united to the Son of God, and by virtue of this union and relation it has the name and designation of the Son of God. Hence it comes to pass, that sometimes the person of the Son of God is denoted by these names *Logos*, *Shekinah*, *memra*; at other times this organized creature is represented as the Son of God: Then he supposes the angels themselves as well as *Adam* were created by the second person acting through this glorious creature as an organ, and made after the image of this *Shekinah*, or original man, though with various degrees of perfection and resemblance. Thus "God made man in his own likeness." This was that intelligent being that appeared to angels, to *Adam*, to *Moses*, to the three martyrs in the fiery furnace, and he appeared in the same bright figure to the three apostles in the mount of transfiguration.

But rather than follow these great men all this length, and set my seal to every thing they propose, I chuse at present to say in the words of Mr. *Fleming*, That "to  
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give a nice or exact adjustment of all these things, may be reserved to *Christ*, to teach us when we come to heaven." And as I am well assured of the doctrine of the deity of *Christ* from many scriptures, so if there be any thing which I have asserted that runs counter to that doctrine, I desire it to be expunged and forgiven.

Thus I have reckoned up two considerable advantages which may be derived from this doctrine of the pre-existent soul of *Christ*, viz. "That it explains and reconciles many dark and difficult passages of scripture, and it casts a new lustre upon other texts, whose beauty, justness, and propriety were not before so much observed." I proceed now to mention some other advantages of it.

Advantage III. Another argument for this doctrine, drawn from the consequences of it, is, That "it does exceedingly aggrandize the personal glory and dignity of our Lord *Jesus Christ*," of whom we never can have too high an esteem, while we keep within the bounds of scripture.

This supposition admits and confirms all the honours paid him by other hypotheses, and adds yet other honours to him. It allows him all the supreme dignity and perfection of the divine nature, and the titles and attributes of true God by virtue of the personal union, and it also better secures and maintains the honour of his deity, by guarding it from those inferior attributions and characters, which otherwise must be ascribed to it before his appearance in flesh; and this it doth by proposing a nature below godhead, which is a fitter subject of these attributions.

It allows him also all the honourable and peculiar prerogatives of his conception and the birth of his body, upon which account, as well as others, he was called the Son of God.

And besides this, it supposes his human soul to be a most illustrious spirit, which had a long prior glorious existence before his incarnation, and to be the first-born of the creation of God, and to have been present with the Father, surveying and approving of his works of creation, and perhaps also employed by him in adorning and disposing various parts of the new-created world, so far as any thing below pure godhead was capable of being employed in that work.

Perhaps it will be objected,

Objection. That this exalts his human nature indeed, and raises it as high as the *arians* have raised the notion of their Logos or soul of *Christ*, which they suppose to be the sublimest nature he has, and call it his godhead or divinity.

But it may be easily replied here,

Answer. And what if we do take in all the advantages which the *arians* so much boast of, and thereby support our own faith more honourably? This will bereave their scheme of it's fairest allurements and strongest supports. What if we do advance the human nature of *Christ* as high as their Logos? Yet whilst we strenuously maintain the necessity of true and proper godhead to belong to the person of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, in order to answer the many divine names, titles, attributes, operations and worship, which are ascribed to him in scripture, we can be in no danger of compliance with the *arian* error, which attributes all these divine characters to the man *Christ Jesus*, and denies his personal union to the godhead.

The aggrandizing of the man *Jesus* has not been esteemed dishonourable to his deity. Doctor *John Owen* affirms "the nature of the man *Christ Jesus* to be filled with all the divine graces and perfections whereof a limited created nature is capable, "Meditations on the glory of *Christ*, page 112." And doctor *Thomas Goodwin* asserts the

the man *Jesus*, by virtue of union to the divine nature, to be "as glorious a creature as can possibly be made by God, vol. III. book iii. chap. 7. page 104."

And what injury can it be to our holy religion, or what hurt can it do to the gospel of *Christ*, to suppose his soul to be as glorious and sublime a being as any thing can be which is not God? This is doing honour to the man whom God the Father delights to honour, and in whom the godhead dwells bodily: And while it wonderfully exalts our esteem of the human nature of *Christ*, it does not diminish the least degree of honour or adoration due to his deity.

Nor can any danger arise to the sacred doctrine of the satisfaction and atonement of *Christ*, from this exaltation of his personal excellencies and honours; but rather it sheds a new glory upon this doctrine, and renders our blessed Saviour so much the fitter to undertake that great, that glorious and dreadful work. Suppose it should be said that this human soul, this man *Jesus*, according to this opinion, is worth ten thousand of us, as the people said to *David*. Then certainly he is so much the more proper person to become a surety for ten thousands of sinners; his life is the more valuable sacrifice to redeem millions of lives; and the death of a man so transcendently excellent is a fitter price to ransom innumerable multitudes of men from death. Yet the infinite merit of his sufferings to satisfy for the infinite offences of mankind, in my judgment arises still from the dignity of his whole person, who is God as well as man, and includes in it the infinite deity united to a finite or created nature; and probably for this reason, was that expression used, *Acts* xx. 28. "God purchased the church with his own blood."

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Conceive of this glorious human spirit, the only begotten Son of God, who was vested with such dignity before the creation of the world, united personally to the divine nature, and thus adored by angels, appearing often to the patriarchs in the form of God, with rays of divine majesty, and governing the nation of *Israel*, or church of God during all the former ages: Behold this holy and happy spirit descending from heaven, to take upon him, not flesh only, but the likeness of *SINFUL* flesh; and according to the antient covenant between him and his Father, now uniting himself to animal nature in very mean and despicable circumstances, and actually, really and sensibly feeling the hardships of poverty and a low estate: See that illustrious being who had been surrounded with ministering angels for many ages, coming into our world with all the marks of poverty and meanness: Behold one higher than angels, supreme above principalities and powers, thrones and heavenly dignities, made a little lower than angels, by being confined to flesh and blood, or made for a little while, *ελαττωθη* \* lower than the angels, and even below the common rank of men, brought forth in a stable, beside the ox and the ass; this very being himself was united to the flesh and limbs of a helpless infant, wrapped in swaddling bands, and laid to sleep in a manger: See this glorious spirit who was replenished with all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge necessary for his illustrious pre-existent state, cramped and confined in its operations by the feeble engine of the body of a babe, and willingly submitting to have a veil of darkness cast over its most

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most sublime intellectual qualifications, and recover his ideas by human degrees: for the child "*Jesus* grew in wisdom and knowledge, as he grew in stature," *Luke* ii. 52. Contemplate this most excellent being enduring all the feeble and innocent frailties of an infant-state, wearing out the years of childhood among the poor and necessitous children in the lower ranks of life, himself the reputed son of a carpenter, and subject to his earthly parents; he that was with God when he built the heavens, and said, "Let there be light, the first among those sons of God who shouted for joy when he laid the foundations of the earth." Behold him now perhaps sweating and toiling with the saw and the hammer, as tradition tells us, to make ploughs and harrows and yokes for oxen: Consider this blessed soul, the antient ornament of heaven, and the brightest created spirit there, now spending thirty years together in utmost obscurity, who had lived for four thousand years in the midst of divine splendors: Trace him wandering through the villages from town to town, hungry, thirsty, and weary: Follow this illustrious man travelling on foot to preach the gospel, attended with a few poor fishermen, instead of the chariots of God and the legions of angels, legions and chariots that waited on him at mount *Sinai*, when in majesty and terror he delivered the law: Consider this very person abused, reproached, and called a blasphemer and a devil, who was the fairest image, and the delight of God his Father, and rejoicing always in his presence before the earth or her mountains were made: Look upon this innocent, this holy soul arraigned, at the impious tribunal of *Pilate*, and condemned to the shameful cross as a scandalous malefactor.

See the antient and original king of *Israel*, who had made *David* and *Solomon*, and all their race his deputies for many generations; see him crowned with thorns instead of glory; see him scourged, buffeted, nailed to the cursed tree between two thieves, his hands and feet pierced, his limbs stretched out in grievous torture, and himself groaning and expiring in blood and anguish.

Behold this original favourite forsaken of God his Father in that dreadful hour of darkness, and assaulted by the armies of hell with rage and impudence and horrid temptations: Think of this holy soul just departing, his soul by the force of exquisite torment perhaps driven out of the sacred mansion of his flesh, even that body which the Father had prepared for him; he was banished out of this world by those very criminals, those merciless rebels for whose salvation he came down to dwell in it.

Think of that antient darling of heaven, now made the sport of the *jewish* rabble, a sacrifice both to the fury of men and to the arrows of vindictive justice, while he was amazed with inward agonies, and "his soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death, when the sword of God awoke against the shepherd of his *Israel*, against the man that was his neighbour, his companion before the angels were made."

Collect all these strange and astonishing ideas together, survey them in one view, and say, how divinely glorious was the love of God in parting with such a Son from his bosom! How amazing was the condescension and self-denial of this glorious Saviour in giving himself for us! How inimitable was his submission to his heavenly Father's will! His zeal for his Father's honour, and his god-like charity and compassion to sinful man! When we contemplate his holy soul in his pre-existent and exalted state, foreknowing and surveying all these indignities, these agonies and deaths, and yet resolving to descend into flesh at his Father's proposal, and to endure them all for the redemption of sinners, to what an inconceivable height of sacred astonishment doth this raise all the wonders of his painful life and his love! and how doth it awaken all that



that is tender in the bosom of a christian, and penetrate the very heart with divine affection and gratitude to the Son of God his Saviour!

When we conceive of this pre-existent soul of *Christ*, this glorious, this holy and happy spirit, with pleasure consenting to his Father's proposal of this most surprizing abasement and bloody agonies, it gives us an example of such profound humility, such absolute obedience to God his Father, and such unspeakable love to sinful men, as far surpasses the greatest instances that he ever gave, or ever was capable of giving while he was here upon earth, if we suppose, according to the common opinion, that he was merely born, and trained up for this service without his own previous consent. This idea of the love of *Christ* answers those sublime characters which the apostle gives of it, *Ephes. iii. 18, 19.* "It is a love that has lengths and breadths in it, that has heights and depths; it is a love that passes knowledge."

You will reply perhaps, "That most part of this representation is true in some sense, if you only suppose the divine nature of our Lord *Jesus Christ* existent before his incarnation, and consenting that his human nature should suffer all this." I answer,

Answer. Many of these things, by the help of tropes and figures, may be said concerning the deity of *Christ*, or God manifest in flesh; but if we leave out the figure of communication of properties, and speak in such plain and natural terms as scripture seems to use generally on this occasion, it signifies only "God's will that the man *Christ* should suffer these sorrows, and that the man *Jesus* passively consented to suffer them when it was revealed to him that he was born and made for this purpose." But the divine nature itself could really suffer nothing of all this; the utmost condescension of the godhead was, that it stood related to the man who endured these sufferings: And infinite condescension it was indeed, for God manifest in the flesh to be thus dishonoured and unglorified. But the godhead itself is impassible still, and cannot really suffer pain or loss; nor undergo proper sensible humiliation, shame or sorrow.

Whereas by aggrandizing the human nature of *Christ*, by this doctrine of his pre-existent state, we see that very same glorious being itself who suffered all this, actually leaving the bosom or beatifying presence of his Father, really divesting himself of his primeval glories and joys in the literal sense, and without a figure, and freely devoting his very self to all these calamitous circumstances: We see that very same spirit descending from heaven to take a body upon him that he might be capable of all these various stages of misery, and of sustaining these scenes of sorrow, anguish and death, persevering in his resolutions till the dreadful work was all finished.

Now where we can explain the language of scripture in a literal and proper sense, where we can also by this literal sense do unspeakable honour to God the Father and his love in sending such a Son, to *Jesus* the Saviour, and his grace in coming down from heaven to suffer such sorrows, and at the same time, can lay a just foundation for raising our own love and zeal, and gratitude both to the Father and the Son, to such unknown and superior degrees, and can set before our eyes such an astonishing example of humility, charity, and self-denial; surely these are such advantages to the christian scheme, and such honours to the blessed gospel, as should not be slightly rejected.

It should be also considered that the *arians* raise a very common and plausible objection against the vulgar explication of the trinity and the divinity of *Christ*, because that scheme allows no real self emptying, no literal and proper abasement and suffering of the Son of God, but only a relative abasement by being united to the man who

did suffer. The author of the "sober appeal to a turk or an indian," endeavours to expose the common scheme of the doctrine of the trinity; because it supposes only a "relative humiliation, a relative or nominal suffering of the Son of God by his uniting himself to a man, while he himself really suffered nothing, underwent no diminution, but was all the while possessed of the highest glory, and of the same unchangeable blessedness, page 145." Whereas this doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul of *Christ* sets the whole scheme of the self-denial and sufferings of *Christ*, in as glorious and advantageous a light as their doctrine can pretend to do; and yet at the same time secures the divinity of *Christ*, together with all the honours of it's condescending grace, by supposing this pre-existent soul always personally united to his divine nature. Thus all this sort of pretences for the support of the *arian* error is destroyed at once, by admitting this doctrine.

Advantage V. This doctrine of the pre-existent soul of *Christ*, not only casts a new lustre upon several parts of the gospel, and displays the glories of the person of *Christ*, and the wonders of his love in a fairer light, but it also "enables us to defend the doctrine of the deity of *Christ* with greater justice and success against many other cavils of the *socinian* and *arian* writers:" For while we keep this doctrine in our eye, we are by no means constrained to interpret any expression in the old testament concerning the divine nature of *Christ*, which carries in it something inferior to the majesty of godhead: Here we have a subject proper to receive these meaner attributions. There is no need to call the mere godhead of *Christ* a man, an angel, a messenger; there is no need to animate a human shape with pure deity in order to wrestle with *Jacob*, to eat and drink with *Abram*, to appear in the form of a flame in the bush to *Moses*, to travel through the wilderness on a cloudy pillar in the sight of all *Israel*, in order to direct the motion of their camp: There is no need to suppose the pure godhead talking with *Joshua*, and conversing familiarly with *Gideon*, nor holding a plumb-line in his hand while he stood upon the wall in the view of *Amos*.

The *arian* will tell us, that these things seem to be too mean and low condescensions for the great God of heaven and earth to practise; and thence they infer, that the person to whom these things are ascribed cannot be true God. Behold then this glorious Spirit, the Son of God, the soul of *Jesus Christ*, the man personally united to the divine nature appearing to perform these actions, to sustain these inferior characters, and to solve all this difficulty; and yet he is rightly called God, Lord, *Jehovah*, and has the perfections and honours of godhead ascribed to him; for he is God as well as man, though his human nature is the immediate agent in these inferior transactions.

Advantage VI. As this doctrine casts a beauty upon various passages of scripture, and upon the whole scheme of the christian faith, so "there is not one scripture, nor one point or article of our faith that can receive any evil influence from it, no dangerous consequences, that I know of, can possibly attend it. Some of the most zealous and learned defenders of the sacred trinity have acknowledged to me, that they could see no danger of heresy in it, nor any injury to sacred truth, though they themselves had not seen this doctrine yet in a convincing light.

And as there is no article of the christian faith that is endangered by it, so "neither does it alter any of the particular schemes of doctrine which divines of various parties have espoused." You may still follow the sentiments of *John Calvin*, or *Arminius*, or the intermediate schemes of *monieur Amyrald* and *Mr. Baxter*, for this doctrine makes no innovation in all the peculiar matters of dispute between these great men, but sets the whole contrivance of our salvation according to any of their schemes



schemes in a better light, and throws perhaps an impartial brightness upon the gospel, though it should be explained in any of their particular methods.

“Nor does it in the least interfere with any particular schemes which men have invented to solve the difficulties of the blessed doctrine of the trinity.” If this sentiment of pre-existence be allowed, the godhead of the sacred persons may still be explained, either according to the antient *athanasian* scheme, which bishop *Pearson*, and bishop *Bull* have defended; or according to the modern or scholastic *athanasianism*, which doctor *Cheyne*, doctor *Owen*, doctor *South*, bishop *Stillingfleet*, and others have well displayed; or according to the hypothesis of doctor *Fowler*, the late bishop of *Gloucester*; or that of the late learned Mr. *John Howe*; or according to the sentiments of the great and learned doctor *John Wallis*, an eminent member of the assembly of divines. This sentiment of the pre-existent soul of *Christ* has a friendly aspect upon any scheme that maintains the godhead of the sacred three; and may be easily assumed and ingrafted into any one of them: But the *socinian* and *arian* errors are inconsistent with it, as I have explained it.

To conclude this last set of arguments on this subject, I beg leave briefly to recapitulate them in this manner. There are many dark and difficult texts of scripture which have puzzled interpreters in several ages, and which have hung heavy upon the various schemes that support the doctrine of the deity of *Christ*. Now suppose there could be one single clue found out, which leads us into such a solution of all these difficulties, and such an interpretation of these scriptures, which has the following advantages attending it, viz.

1. Which gives the most natural and obvious, and literal sense; so that every common reader that had no pre-conceived notions or schemes of thought, would readily run into at the very hearing of it:

2. Which puts learned men to no trouble of figures and metaphors, such as “prolepses;” that is, speaking of things before they are done; or “catachreses,” that is, calling the eternal God, without actual union to human nature, a man, or an angel, or a messenger, a captain, &c.

3. Which is most consistent with, and most agreeable to all other parts of the word of God, both in the old testament and in the new, and renders the exposition of many other texts easier and plainer than before, and sets the several parts of scripture in a beautiful harmony:

4. Which interferes with no particular scheme of divinity, nor makes any alterations in the important articles of our faith: And thus it does not widen the common differences of the several parties of christians, but freely allows each of them their own sentiments in the common controversies of religion: And yet,

5. Which assists us to answer the objections of our opponents against the divinity of our blessed Saviour, and also allures them to embrace the truth:

6. Which aggrandizes the personal glories of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and raises his condescension and his love to most amazing degrees:

7. Which spreads a new lustre over the whole gospel of *Christ*, and the various transactions recorded in the word of God;

I say, suppose such a single clue were found out to lead us into the understanding of the holy scripture in such a manner as I have described, I would humbly ask, whether it does not bid fair for the truth of gospel, and the very meaning of the sacred writers? And whether it has not sufficient force and allurements in it to invite our assent? Such is the doctrine of the pre-existence of the human soul of *Christ*.

## S E C T I O N VI.

*Objections answered.*

**W**HEN any doctrine has been proved by sufficient force of argument, there may be still various difficulties that remain to perplex it. But if those difficulties are not of equal force or evidence with the arguments that have been before produced for the support of it, we may reasonably give our assent to the doctrine, and wait until providence may afford a fairer light to scatter the clouds that hang upon it. There is one learned author\*, who has written upon this subject, speaks with so much freedom as to tell us, that "in this doctrine of the pre-existent soul of *Christ*, the difficulty of every thing vanishes, except that of bringing men off from expounding the scripture by human authorities as the key of divine oracles; and without doubt, saith he, there the difficulty will lie, when all is said." So confident is he of the truth of it, and that on solid and sufficient reason.

However, that I may make it appear that the difficulties and objections which attend this doctrine may have a fair solution given them, I have left the last section for this purpose, in which they are ranged in a fair just order; and I hope the opposers, if any such be found, will have no reason to complain that I have not displayed them in their complete light and strength; and perhaps by this means the tender and scrupulous christian may have some stumbling-blocks removed that lay in his way, and be more easily induced to receive this doctrine, and to pay proper honour to our blessed Lord.

Objection I. "Is not *Christ* frequently in scripture called a man? Now this glorious being with such extensive powers as you describe, is something above a human soul; it is far above angels, and therefore though it be united to a body it will not make a man."

Answer I. The name of man denotes a nature, which is made up of a mind or spirit united to an animal body in human shape. But the name angel signifies originally a messenger, and denotes the character of an office sustained by a spirit, either with, or rather without a human body, and is most frequently so used in scripture; though angels have often appeared in human shapes, being appointed by the great God to assume such a shape on proper occasions.

Answer II. All the idea which I have of a human soul is this, viz. A created mind or spirit which hath understanding and will, and rational powers, and which is fit to be united to a human body, in such a manner as to exert the powers of a man, to feel the appetites and sensibilities and passions of a man, as to receive impressions or sensations, whether pleasant or painful, by the means of that body, and is also able to actuate and influence all the animal powers of that body in a way agreeable to human nature. Now though the powers of the human soul of *Christ* may be as much superior to the most exalted man or angel, as the powers of the most exalted man are superior to the powers of an idiot; yet this does not hinder it from being properly called a human soul, supposing it still capable of, and fit for such an union to a human body, as I have described.

Answer.

\* Mr. *Joseph Hussy*, who was really a man of learning, though he had some odd and peculiar sentiments.



Answer III. The powers of the human soul of *Christ* in his now glorified state are represented in the word of God to be so extensive beyond and above men or angels, that might give as just an occasion for this objection as any thing I have asserted concerning his pre-existent state, and yet he is still a man. What large and comprehensive faculties of understanding and will may be communicated to a glorified creature, is far above our skill to determine: Now *Christ* was in glory, or was a glorified creature before he was in flesh, even before the world was made, *John* xvii. 5. And therefore his antient powers in the pre-existent state might be very great, and yet his soul might still be a human soul.

But if no mere creature were capable of such powers and honours as are attributed to *Christ* in his exalted state, yet we cannot determine what vast and amazing capacities such a creature may be endued with, who was always personally united to God; and it is in this view, it is *Christ* as a man united to godhead, who has such extensive powers as may fit him to govern, and to judge the world, as I have shewn in a former discourse, to which I refer the reader. See pages 772—801.

I add further, that it was the perusal and study of some of those scriptures wherein so vast and extensive a knowledge and power are attributed to the man *Jesus* in his present glorified state, that led the way to my more easy belief of the powers and glories of his antient state of pre-existence: And thence I thought I might infer, that since the man who has these amazing glories and powers now, was once without them here on earth; therefore the same human soul might be with God the Father from the beginning of the world; might enjoy some part of these powers and glories, and yet for a season divest himself of them at his incarnation, and then be restored to them again with a most illustrious addition as a reward of his sufferings, *John* xvii. 5.

Objection II. Some persons have been ready to cry out against this doctrine, as though it supposed the “pre-existent nature or natures of *Christ* to be united to a mere carcass, if it were united only to an animal body without a soul or spirit.”

Answer I. In antient and more ignorant ages, this might perhaps be a stumbling-block to some weaker philosophers, who would mingle their mistaken philosophy with their christianity, and falsely imagined that an animal body was a mere dead carcass, without some immaterial being in it, some superior vital soul or spirit: But in the present age, when it is generally believed by the best philosophers, that animal bodies may have animal life in and of themselves, and all correspondent animal motions and powers, without any spiritual intelligent thinking substance superadded to them, this objection vanishes. *Christ*'s pre-existent soul, united to his divine nature, assumed a living animal human body when he became incarnate; for it is now agreed that the human thinking rational soul does not give animal life to the organized body, which life arises from the circulation of the blood, inspiration and expiration of air, &c.

Answer II. But suppose the human body were lifeless, without a rational soul, why may not *Christ*'s rational pre-existent soul be united to this body, and give life to it as well as a new created soul? Therefore this objection vanishes in all the views of it.

Objection III. “How can you suppose so glorious a being as you have described, who was present at the creation of the world, who governed the nation of *Israel*, and transacted the affairs of the church for four thousand years, should lose all it's vast treasures of ideas, and it's extensive faculties, and become ignorant as a human infant, and

and grow up by degrees to knowledge and wisdom? Yet this is asserted concerning Christ in his childhood," *Luke ii. 52. Jesus increased in wisdom and stature.*"

Answer. If such a sentiment as this can be fairly accounted for according to reason and scripture, then the objectors must allow that it adds a most astonishing lustre to the humility, condescension, self-denial and love of our blessed Lord. Now let us see whether it may not be explained according to the common laws of union between a human soul and body.

Amongst these laws of this union, which are appointed by God our Creator, it is evident from manifold experience that this is one, viz. "That though the soul may have in itself ever so rich ideas, or powers ever so glorious and extensive, yet while it is united to animal nature in this manner, it can exert them to no farther than the organs of the animal will admit, or than those organs are fit to assist in such operations." There have been many instances wherein persons of eminence and skill in arts or sciences, have had the brain, with all the traces and images which were impressed upon it, so confounded by some disease, that they have lost almost all their ideas, and all their skill; they have forgot even their native language, and they knew not their own names: Sometimes by slow degrees they have recovered their ideas and words again, and perhaps in some years have arrived at their former excellencies; the brain has recovered it's old traces and images again, and the soul has recognized them with pleasure, and that in much less time than it was first employed in acquiring them.\*

Yet further, let us suppose the soul of the greatest philosopher or mathematician united to the body of a new-born infant: This soul would find no images or traces on the brain of the babe correspondent to his antient ideas; but on the other hand it would receive incessant impressions and sensations from this infant brain, according to the laws of union, derived from the sensible objects around it, or the natural inward motions and appetites that attend the infant state; and thus all it's antient and learned ideas would be as it were obliterated for a season, or rather concealed and overwhelmed, or buried by the impetuous impressions of animal nature, and by the constant importunity of such sensations and images as belong to a new-born child.

It is true indeed that such a learned soul would recover it's own ideas by much swifter degrees than one that had never possessed them; and it would form proper traces and images on the young human brain with much greater speed and facility than other children could attain them, whose souls never had these learned ideas.

And is it not possible that this may be the case of the holy child Jesus? His glorious soul might submit to have it's former numerous and sublime ideas as it's first union to animal nature, so concealed and overwhelmed by the importunate and overbearing impressions of infant-animal nature, that it might recover them again only by such degrees as flesh and blood would admit; and thus he was "made for a little while lower than angels," as *Heb. ii. 9.* and so might "grow in wisdom and know-

\* This may be represented by an easy similitude. Suppose an organist of exquisite skill in music should have all the pipes of his instrument filled with mud, he could neither excite with his hand, nor receive with his ear, any of those rich varieties of sound which belong to the organ, until by degrees the bellows and pipes were cleansed; and thus by degrees he would form and hear broken pieces of tunes, until the muddy obstacle being quite removed, the grateful harmony will be recovered, and the former skill of the organist appear.



knowledge and stature together," as in *Luke* ii. 52. And indeed if we compare this with *Isa.* ix. 6. and *Isa.* vii. 14, 15. those verses may be naturally explained to this sense. He was a child born, he was a son given; a virgin conceived and bare a son, and called his name *Immanuel*: "Butter and honey did he eat, that he might know to refuse the evil and chuse the good;" that is, he was nourished with the common food which they gave young children, that he might grow up by degrees to human understanding, and knowledge of distinction between good and evil.

It seems also agreeable to the history of the gospel, that our blessed Lord attained the knowledge of things by much swifter degrees, and far greater facility than common children; for at twelve years old he was found discoursing with the doctors in the temple: And when he first preached to the *jews*, they wondered how this man should "know letters having never learned," *John* vii. 15. And then in his manly state, he knew his near relation to God, and his pre-existent glory, as man yof his own speeches testify. According to this representation, Mr. *Fleming* in his "christology, book III. page 455." supposes "the notices of former things to be so far obliterated from the memory of this glorious spirit, as was just necessary to his being fitted for a state of trial in a human body. But he did so far remember his former exaltation and glory in general, as frequently to mention it, and to plead it sometimes in prayer to his Father;" particularly in *John* xvii. 5.

I am not so fond of this representation of things as to persuade myself that my readers will readily receive such a strange alteration of scenes passing over the soul of our blessed Lord; especially if they have never accustomed their understandings to indulge any opinion different from the common track: Yet I can declare solemnly, that after my best searches into the word of God, I can see nothing unscriptural, absurd or dangerous in such a representation; and I am well assured it gives the highest honour to our blessed redeemer for this surprizing instance of his obedience to his Father, and condescending love to mankind: Nor is there any thing we can imagine that will set his admirable self-denial and humility, and his inimitable love in a nobler light; or more aggrandize the love of the Father in parting with such a son out of his bosom, and confining him to such a state of union to a body and such amazing humiliation.

Objection IV. "Is it not said frequently in the new testament, that *Christ* was exalted to glory and honour, and to the government of all things after his resurrection, as a reward of his sufferings and death? Now if the human soul of *Christ* in it's pre-existent state, being in union with the divine nature, had glory and happiness before the world was, and might be employed in most glorious works, even at the creation of the world, and afterwards in the works of providence; then how can this excellent spirit be said to be exalted as a reward of his sufferings, by having the government of the world given to him after his resurrection, or by being advanced to glory and honour and happiness in heaven?"

Answer I. I have already shewn, that how great and glorious soever the powers of *Christ* were before his incarnation, yet he might be made governor not only of the church, or of God's chosen people the *jews*, during all former ages of his pre-existent state, and thus he was called the king of the *jews*; but after his sufferings he was advanced to sovereignty over all nations, and made "head over all things, and all nations of mankind for the church's sake," *Eph.* i. 22.

Answer

Answer II. What affairs he transacted, and what honours he received during his pre-existent state among the children of men, was, for the most part, in his Father's name, and as sustaining the character and person of God his Father; : Now since his sufferings and death he is advanced to receive these honours in his own name, as well as raised to a government of much larger extent. Before the creation he had no honour from creatures, and after the creation he had not such sublime and distinct honours paid to his human nature before his incarnation, as he has now in heaven.

Answer III. It is very plain that though the human soul of *Christ* might enjoy a glorious degree of honour and happiness before his incarnation, yet having properly the nature of a human soul, it could not arrive at it's perfection of appointed happiness, but by it's union with a human body; even as the spirits of departed saints enjoy a glorious degree of honour and happiness in the world of spirits; yet neither their honour nor happiness is complete until the resurrection, when they shall be rejoined to immortal bodies, and their happiness and honour shall be completed by unknown sensations of pleasure. Besides, that sensible survey, those various sensations and eye-sight of their own exaltation, which they acquire by the means of their union to a glorified body, is a farther kind of honour and happiness than in a separate state they were capable of.

Thus the human soul of *Christ* having passed through the sorrows of life, and the painful sensations that arose from it's union to our flesh in such poor and infirm circumstances, having suffered shame and reproach, and a thousand indignities from men, and having felt the agonies of death as a ransom for them, was exalted both to greater honour and greater happiness at his resurrection and ascension, by being united to a body raised in power and in glory, than he could have been without it.

1. He was exalted to greater degrees of happiness, by receiving all that intense pleasure, and those unknown sensations of delight, which are capable of being conveyed to a spirit by the medium of a body, a glorious body; and this as a reward of his sensations of pain in the body of his humiliation.

2. It is most probable that he is and shall be exalted also to greater degrees of honour, by seeing and hearing, or taking in perhaps by some corporeal methods, all the honours done to him by the whole human and material creation, and in beholding with a vast and comprehensive survey, all the subjection and obedience of the known and unknown worlds of spirits dwelling in flesh, paid to him; and particularly all the acclamations and worship of all the glorified saints paid to his divine person as dwelling in a human body, and this as a reward of that shame and reproach, and those uneasy passions which he might sustain in animal nature in his humbled state.

Thus it appears how the soul of *Jesus Christ*, though it had very great powers and dignities and blessedness in it's pre-existent state, yet may receive a most sensible addition to it's honours and happinesses when he was raised from the dead and ascended to heaven in a glorified body. There are parallel instances in scripture which confirm this account of things, *John xvii. 22.* our Saviour says, "The Father loved him before the foundation of the world;" and yet his Father's love is said to be continued to him, and to be bestowed on him, on the account of this obedience, *John xiv. 10.* "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love." *John x. 17.* "Therefore doth my



my Father love me because I lay down my life." We must naturally suppose this to imply some additional instances and effects of the Father's love bestowed, or to be bestowed on *Christ*, because of his obedience unto death: And what additional instances, manifestations or effects of the Father's love did the man *Jesus* receive, if his exaltation to superior degrees of honour and glory in heaven be not reckoned among them?

Objection V. "If the human soul of *Christ* had a being before his incarnation, how comes it to be expressed, that God was manifest in the flesh, and that the Word was God, and this Word was made flesh? Would it not have been much more proper to say, the soul of our Lord *Jesus Christ* was thus made flesh, or manifested in flesh?"

Answer I. The most usual way of expressing the incarnation of *Christ* is, by representing the Son of God as "coming in the flesh, *Christ* coming into the world, the Son of God made of a woman, the Son of God sent into this world, &c." This is the most frequent language of the new testament: Now these words do most properly include, if not chiefly denote, the soul of *Christ* under the character of the *Messiah*. This was the Son of God which was intimately united to flesh and blood. It is possible that the name, Son of God, may not so directly refer to the godhead of *Christ*, as it does to his human soul and his body; for since the idea of sonship carries in it the notion of derivation and dependence, and inferiority, we should not without great necessity apply such ideas to godhead, whose very nature is to be supreme, underived and independent. This hath been made to appear more at large in an essay on that name "the Son of God." See pages 647—673.

It is granted there are two or three places which represent the divine nature or God himself as appearing in the flesh; and this may be written in those few places, with a special design to aggrandize the mystery of the incarnation, and spread a divine glory over it: always remembering that it is a great truth that "God himself was incarnate," though the more immediate subject of union to flesh was the human soul.

Answer II. It might be noted also, that that evangelical interpreter of scripture doctor *Goodwin* explains the Logos or Word, even as it is described in the first chapter of St. *John's* gospel, so as to include the idea of God-man, and to take in the human nature of *Christ* as well as the divine, when "the Word was with God, and when all things were made by him." That author indeed supposes the human nature to be united at that time only in the divine idea, and by way of "prolepsis" or anticipation: But if we suppose the term Logos or Word to include the human soul then actually united to the divine nature, which doctor *Goodwin* takes only proleptically, then it will follow that when the evangelist adds, verse 14. "The Word was made flesh," or took a body upon him, he plainly includes the incarnation both of the human soul and the godhead together. The Logos, that is, the human soul united to godhead, or if you chuse rather to say the eternal Word in union with the human soul, became incarnate.

Objection VI. "This doctrine expounds some of those scriptures to another sense, which were wont to be employed for the defense of the divinity of *Christ*, and that by applying them to his pre-existent soul: It exalts his human nature indeed, but perhaps it weakens the sacred article of his divine nature, by withdrawing some of the proofs of it."

Answer. There are many and sufficient arguments drawn from the word of God to support the deity of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, which cannot with any evidence or truth or justice be turned to another sense, and indeed it is by such arguments as

these that doctrine must be established; for if it be possible with fairness or justice to the text and context to interpret a scripture otherwise, and apply it merely to the pre-existent soul of *Christ*, it can never be a convincing and effectual proof of his divinity.

It is no injury to any cause to remove those arguments from it which are in themselves feeble and unsupporting, lest when the adversary finds several of them trifling and utterly insufficient he should be tempted to despise all the rest. If there be any of those scriptures which are used to prove any doctrine that in their most natural, most proper, and most rational sense, and in their relation to the context do rather signify something else, then they had much better be dropped or left out in the proof of that doctrine.

So if these scriptures cited in this discourse are in a much more natural and proper, easy and obvious manner applied to the pre-existent soul of *Christ* than they are or can be to the pure divine nature, then it is better to drop them in that argument than to insist upon them, for all the reason in the world will lead us to give them the most obvious and natural exposition, and apply them to this pre-existent spirit. We ought not to deal falsely with the word of God, nor give it an unfair and improbable sense under pretence of supporting the greatest truth. The gospel of *Christ* needs not our feeble artifices.

It should be observed also, that several of those passages of scripture, which may be applied to the pre-existent soul of *Christ*, cannot properly be applied to it considered alone by itself without the personal union to his godhead, such are those *Col. i. 15—19. Heb. i. 3—8. Prov. viii. 22—31*. And in this view they continue to support the divinity of *Christ*, as well as they did before: And in my opinion when they are set in this light, they render these proofs of his divinity more defensible, and at once maintain the sacred idea of *Christ* our mediator as the great "Theanthropos" or God-man.

Objection VII. "Some may imagine, and have been ready to object, That this notion paves the way to lead us into the *arian* camp, since it agrees in so many parts with their sentiments of their Logos, which they call the divine nature of *Christ*."

Answer. This objection has been answered in part already; nor is there any such danger while we maintain the necessity of the union of the divine nature to this pre-existent spirit in order to make it capable of several names, titles, honours and prerogatives that are ascribed to it in scripture, which are incommunicably divine.

But on the other hand, why may not the charity of a reader give it another turn, and say, "It paves the way for the *arians* to come into the sentiments of the orthodox, and believe the divinity of *Christ*," since it removes some of their greatest bars and objections against our common faith? It transplants their strongest allurements and fairest colours of argument into our own doctrine, and thereby renders their pretences to support their own scheme more feeble, ineffectual and needless. It enjoys the advantages which their scheme pretends to, without any of those difficulties and inconveniencies with which their opinion is incumbered.

And I cannot but hope that if ever the modern refiners of the *arian* error are allured and drawn to receive the truth, it must be by the means of this doctrine and the happy consequences which attend it. Perhaps if this doctrine had been set in it's fairest light, and published to the world in the days of the *nicene* council, it might have prevented the fatal and bloody contests that succeeded in the following ages; it might have been a happy medium in the providence of God to have reconciled the antient *arians* to the catholic faith. This is the sentiment of the late  
reverend



reverend and learned writer Mr. *Robert Fleming* in his discourse on this subject, in his third volume of "christology."

Objection VIII. "Could such a doctrine as this be true, and yet the disciples of *Christ* know nothing of it in our Saviour's life-time, nor the apostles express it in plainer language in their writings, nor the primitive Fathers declare it as the sentiment of the church, nor even our own divines in these enlightened days since the reformation proclaim it to the world?"

Answer. As for the disciples during the life of *Christ*, they may be supposed to have the same opinions concerning the soul of the *Messiah*, which many of the *jews* had in and before their times; and that was, that the *Messiah's* soul was formed from the beginning of the world\*: and if they thought all human souls had a pre-existence, which some learned men suppose, then doubtless they believed the soul of *Christ* to have the same prerogative.

Besides the several expressions which our Saviour used concerning "his coming down from heaven, his returning thither again, his being sent by the Father not to do his own will, his praying for the restoration of a glory which he had before the world was, and his speaking of the love of God which he enjoyed before the foundations of the world," all these expressions might justly and naturally lead them into the idea of the pre-existent soul of *Christ*, since it is pretty evident that they had but very little thought or belief of his divine nature before his resurrection. Some of their own expressions seem to intimate their assent to this doctrine of his pre-existent soul, when they tell him, "Now we are sure that thou comest forth from God," *John* xvi. 28, 29, 30. And they seemed to understand him in the literal sense, and without a parable or figure, when he told them, "He came forth from the Father, and came into this world, but he was now leaving this world, and returning to the Father."

As for the writings of the apostles *St. Peter* and *Paul*, these seem to manifest this doctrine, if the exposition which I have given of various parts of their epistles be just and true. The apostle *John* speaking so often of *Christ's* coming in the flesh, seems to manifest that this was his conception of the matter, as though he supposed his soul to have an existence before.

As for the primitive writers of christianity of the first two or three hundred years, they express themselves in so inaccurate and confused a manner concerning the pre-

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\* Bishop *Fowler* cites this passage from an ancient book of the *jews* called *Pesikta*, "After God had created the world, he put his hand upon the throne of his glory, and brought out the soul of the *Messiah*, with all his attendants, and said to him, Wilt thou heal and redeem my sons after six thousand years? He answered, I am willing so to do. Again therefore God said unto him, And art thou willing to suffer chastisements for the purging away their iniquities? And the soul of the *Messiah* answered, I will suffer them, and that with all my heart."

The late doctor *Thomas Burnet* of the *Charter-house* in his book "De statu mortuorum & resurgentium," page 249. speaks thus, "Judæi & inter patres, &c. that is, the *jews* and some among the christian fathers have determined, that the soul of the *Messiah* had an existence before his incarnation, and before the very origin of the *jewish* nation, before the law, and through the whole oeconomy of the law and the prophets." Now if they supposed this soul joined with the *Logos*, by which he means his divine nature, they might well agree that this was the *Shekinah* of the patriarchs and the prophets, and that these motions and returns from heaven to earth, and his appearances whether in human shape or not, may be attributed to the *Messiah*, which can never belong to mere divinity. And indeed I can scarce understand *Justin Martyr* and other of the fathers, who from the invisibility, infinity and omnipresence of God the Father would prove that he never appeared, neither could he descend or ascend, or change his place: for unless the soul of the *Messiah* did pre-exist in union with the *Logos*, that is, his divinity, I cannot see how these arguments, drawn from invisibility and omnipresence, can be of any force with regard to God the Father any more than to God the Son.

existent nature of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, that it is hard to say what was their sense, or whether they had any uniform, regular and settled ideas on this subject. Sometimes their language plainly denotes some pre-existent nature of *Christ* to be truly divine, and part of the very essence of God the Father, even his mind, his wisdom, &c. others of their speeches seem to sink it far below the dignity of godhead when they speak of his temporal generation and derivation from God as the author and cause of his being, from which the *arian* writers have taken occasion to suppose they were engaged on their side. Now as this doctrine of the pre-existent soul of *Christ* united to true godhead, happily reconciles many difficult places of scripture, so perhaps if it were wisely applied upon a diligent review of the writings of some of the fathers, this same doctrine might reconcile some of their strange expressions which seem contradictory and inconsistent: at least I am sure it would have secured them from some of the absurdities which they seem to have fallen into.

It is worthy of our notice, that many if not most of the antient *antenicene* fathers, when they speak of the generation of the Son, understand by it a voluntary generation or manifestation some time before the world began, in order to create that world: though they suppose the divine Logos or Word to exist in God, or in and with the Father from all eternity. That great and zealous defender of the *athanasian* faith, the learned doctor *Waterland*, allows this in his citation from several of those fathers; see "Second defense of the queries," pages 104, 107, 283—292. and his third defense, page 25. Particularly *Ignatius* had this idea of the generation of the Son. *Justin Martyr* speaks of no generation higher than that voluntary ante-mundane generation otherwise called manifestation. The Logos became a Son according to *Justin*, by voluntary appointment; it is the procession makes him a Son, and that was voluntary. The Son proceeded light of light in time according to *Justin*, and according to many more beside him, particularly *Hippolytus*, and perhaps even the *nicene* fathers. *Tatian* who was *Justin's* scholar, speaks only of a temporal generation or procession. And *Athenagoras* and *Theophilus* speak of no higher generation than this. *Clemens of Alexandria* and *Tertullian* may be both allowed to go upon the same hypothesis, and *Hippolytus* was undoubtedly of the same mind, for he says, "The Father begat the Son when he willed and as he willed," that is, sent or shewed him to the world. *Tertullian* supposes the "sonship properly to commence with his procession, so that the Logos became a Son in time, and was not yet a Son until he came out to create."

We might ask here now, whether all these expressions may not be reconciled, if we suppose the deity of the second person of the trinity, as some persons have done, to be an eternal divine principle in godhead, which is represented in scripture as a person called his Logos or sophia, his word or his wisdom: and that some time before the creation of the world, God created, generated, or caused to exist the human soul of *Jesus Christ* in an immediate union with this word or divine principle, and gave the whole complexum the same name, viz. the Logos or Word, and ordained this glorious being, viz. his own divine Word or Logos united to the human spirit, to operate in creating and adorning the world, the human spirit having a subserviency herein to the divine principle, so far as it was possible for any thing beneath God to be employed in an inferior or ministerial manner in such sublime and divine work. Does not this give a fair, a natural and easy explication of these glorious expressions of scripture concerning our Lord *Jesus Christ*, that "by him God made the worlds, and created all things by him, and without him was nothing made that

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that was made?" For the name *Jesus Christ* seems to imply something more than the mere divine power or principle called the Word.

But I retreat, and mention no more of any attempt to give a particular idea of the divine nature of *Christ*, since this doctrine of his human soul's early existence is consistent with any known scheme of explaining his true and real deity.

*Origen* seems to be a believer of the pre-existent soul of *Christ*, when he says, "Perhaps the soul of the Son in it's perfection was in God and his fulness, and coming out thence when he was sent by the Father, took a body of *Mary*;" and again, upon these words of *John* the baptist, "After me cometh a man which is preferred before me, for he was before me," *John* i. 30. He says thus, that it is spoken of *Christ*, "that we may learn that the man [or manhood] also of the Son of God, mixed with his divinity, had a prior subsistence to his birth of the virgin." *Origen* also seems to allow this human soul to be the first created; for speaking of the formation of wisdom before the world, he says, God created *Ἐμφύχον Σοφίαν*, "An animated wisdom, or wisdom with a soul." And this opinion appeared so very reasonable, that we find some marks of it in the later centuries. For the author of the "meditations, called *St. Austin's*," distinguishes between eternal wisdom the Son of God, and the first created wisdom; which he makes to be a rational and intellectual mind. See more of this kind in the learned doctor *Knicht's* "Primitive christianity vindicated," in answer to Mr. *Whiston*, page 45.

But after all, though it be a doctrine, that has so many happy advantages attending it, yet it is not necessary in order to make a man a christian, and therefore many primitive christians might not believe it. It casts a beauty indeed upon the whole christian faith, but it does not make a part of the essence of it. Now there are many such beautiful doctrines which might have a veil of darkness or confusion thrown upon them very early in the christian church, especially amidst the reign of *Antichrist*, and again after some ages may emerge into light and entertain the christians of such a later age with the brightness and pleasure of them: How was the doctrine of the millennium long obscured, that is, "the happy state of the church before the end of the world?" It was known and believed in the first centuries, but after the third it was counted a sort of heresy for several ages; and yet now it has arisen into further evidence, and has obtained almost universal assent, so this doctrine of *Christ's* pre-existent soul, though it might have lain dormant several ages, yet since that excellent man doctor *Henry More* has published it near three score years ago in his "great mystery of godliness," it has been embraced, as bishop *Fowler* asserts, "by many of our greatest divines, as valuable men as our church can boast of; though most of them have been too sparing in owning it, for fear, I suppose, of having their orthodoxy called in question."

The most modern authors and writings which have professed this doctrine publicly, are these that follow\*.

1. Doctor *Henry More*, of "the mystery of godliness."
2. Doctor *Edward Fowler*, bishop of *Gloucester*, in his "discourse of the descent of the man *Christ Jesus* from heaven," and his "reflexions on the examiner of this discourse," [doctor *William Sherlock*, dean of *St. Paul's*.]
3. A "defense of the bishop's discourse, by a presbyter of the church of *England*."
4. A "second defense, by the publisher of the first."

5. Mr. *Re-*

\* Note, This was written at least twenty or thirty years ago, many more persons may be now found who have acknowledged it.

5. Mr. *Robert Fleming* in his first and third volumes of "christology."
6. A very great man cited, but nameless, by bishop *Fowler* in his reflexions," &c. page 111.
7. Mr. *Joseph Hussy*, in his treatise of "the glory-man."
8. Doctor *Francis Gastrell*, bishop of *Chester*, in his "remarks on doctor *Clarke's* scripture-doctrine of the trinity," page 47.
9. Mr. *Nelson's* learned friend, doctor *Knight*, in answer to doctor *Clarke*, pages 65, 103.
10. Doctor *Thomas Bennet*, in his "discourse of the trinity in unity."
11. The learned doctor *Thomas Burnet* of the *Charter-house*, in his book "De statu mortuorum & resurgentium," published after his death.
12. "The doctrine of the trinity intelligibly explained by doctor *Thomas Burnet*, rector of *Westkington* in *Wiltshire*, and prebendary of *Salisbury*."
13. Doctor *Knight's* "Primitive christianity vindicated," in answer to Mr. *Whiston's* bold assertions.

In three of these books I confess this opinion is but just mentioned, as the certain and probable opinion of the author; but in the rest it is strenuously asserted and maintained, and in some of them with great degrees of assurance: And I think every one of them do profess and maintain the real and proper deity of *Christ* in that or other parts of their works, so that there is no *arian* among them all.

After authors of such learning and reputation in the world, as some of these which are named, I have ventured to propose this doctrine once more to the public. It is attended with a variety of arguments drawn from the holy scripture for the support of it, and I have stated much stronger objections than I have ever met with in opposition to it from any *english* or foreign writers, and I do not find them impossible to be answered.

I dare not assume that air of assurance which bishop *Fowler* has done in several parts of his writings on this subject, when he tells us, "that there is no christian doctrine more clearly delivered than this, and even immediately by our Saviour himself, and often repeated by him: and let the opposers of it be as magisterially positive as they will, yet there is not more plain and undeniable evidence for any one article of faith than there is for this doctrine; and that this is the sense in which most certainly the disciples of our Lord understood his declarations." See his "reflexions on his opposer, doctor *William Sherlock*, pages 3, and 23." Yet I think I can join with him when he asserts that "our Saviour never said a syllable which so much as seems to contradict the plain literal natural sense of the words by which he chose to express this doctrine; and that it is worthy of our observation that there is no one text in the bible, that the bishop knows of, whose plain and natural sense so much as seems to thwart the plain sense of those scriptures that he has produced to support it; and he adds, what controverted point is there in religion of which we can say the like?"

I easily persuade myself that most christians will agree with me thus far, That if this doctrine be true, it gives a natural and easy solution of a great number of difficulties in the word of God, it adds beauty as well as clearness to many expressions in the new and old testament, and it enables us to answer many inconveniencies and appearing absurdities which the *arians* fling upon the common explications of the trinity. But if there be any sufficient argument to refute this doctrine and to prove it false, I am not so fond of it as to persist obstinately in the defense, nor make all things truckle and yield to this supposition.

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The great doctrine of the deity of *Christ*, and his sacred office of mediator, may perhaps be maintained without it; but then we must return again to explain some of these difficult texts of scripture by hard tropes and figures; we must speak of *Christ* as God-man before his taking our nature upon him by way of "prolepsis" or anticipation. We must apply many inferior expressions of scripture to the divine person of *Christ*, considered in his office as mediator, which might otherwise and much better be applied to his human soul; we must construe some phrases into truth economically which can never be true in their real and natural sense. We must indulge some catachreses or improprieties of language in the bible, which might be literally and properly expounded by the scheme now proposed: We must solve other expressions by the doctrine of communication of properties between the divine and human natures of *Christ*, in the same manner as we did before; some of which solutions, I confess, are certainly necessary and always will be so, to explain some scriptures that relate to the person of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, according to the well-known methods of speech in all nations and ages. But we would never chuse these interpretations, where there is a more plain literal sense which is perfectly accommodated to the text.

As this doctrine, so far as we have gone in explaining it, has given abundant light to many scriptures, there are also other texts which if we drop this doctrine we must leave under a heavy cloud still, among the ἀλυσία and δυσανησία, the unsolvables and the things hard to be understood; and we must still be daily waiting upon the Father of lights, until he shall give us further discoveries of his own meaning in those passages of his holy word, which I think are made sufficiently plain in and by this scheme: We must wait until providence and grace shall join to furnish us with a better clue than this to lead us into the mysterious glories of the person of our blessed redeemer, the more complete knowledge whereof is reserved to entertain saints and angels in the future ages of blessedness. There it is certain, if we shall be so happy as to accept of his gospel, we shall "see him as he is, and behold him face to face; then shadows shall flee away, and darkness vanish for ever, for in his light we shall see light." Amen.

## A P P E N D I X.

O R,

“ A short abridgment of that excellent discourse of the late reverend doctor THOMAS GOODWIN, on the glories and royalties that belong to *Jesus Christ* considered as God-man, in his third book of “ his knowledge of God the Father and his Son *Jesus Christ*. page 85,” in the second volume of his works.”

HAVING found occasion in several parts of the foregoing discourse to cite some passages out of this learned and pious writer, who soars far higher than I dare to do in describing the glories due to the human nature of *Christ Jesus*, I thought it might be very entertaining to many of my readers, as well as serviceable to the doctrine here proposed, to draw out an abridgement of that discourse which he wrote concerning the “ glories of *Christ* as God-man,” so far as it relates to this doctrine.

Hereby the pious reader will easily perceive, that the manner in which I have expounded many scriptures, is nobly patronized and supported by this great author, whose name and memory are honoured among evangelical writers, and continue in high esteem among many private christians of the present age; and whose special character it is to have searched deep into the hidden treasures of the word of God, and drawn out thence many peculiar glories which belong to the person and offices of our blessed Saviour.

Though I call this an “ abridgement,” of doctor *Goodwin*’s discourse, yet it is necessary I should tell the world that it may rather be called a “ collection of his sentiments in his own words;” for I have never added or altered any words but where it was necessary to make the sense plain, and to connect the sentences: So that both the sentiments and the language are all his own.

In chapter I. page 95. He lays the foundation of his discourse on *Col. i. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19*, and transcribes all the verses. “ Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: All things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist: And he is the head of the body the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him  
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should all fulness dwell." Then he writes thus, All this fulness, and the particulars thereof mentioned in this text, are attributed to *Christ* as God-man, either as actually united or to be united in one person.

To take off prejudices, saith he, it is meet the reader should know how that holy and greatest light of the reformed churches *Calvin* interprets the first passage, "He is the image of the invisible God," viz. "It is he alone by whom God, who is otherwise invisible, is manifested to us: I know how the antients are wont to expound this, because they had a controversy with the *arians*, who held *Christ* "to be a mere creature;" they urge this place for *Christ*'s being of the same essence or nature with the Father; but in the mean time they omitted what was the chief thing in the words, namely, how the Father hath exhibited himself in *Christ* to be known by us."

Then the doctor adds, page 101. That all and every one of these particulars before rehearsed are those glories which as so many several pieces do make up this pre-eminence, and are parts of that fulness which is said to dwell in him: and the apostle makes all this fulness to reside in *Christ* by an act of God's good pleasure. Hence I infer of all these parts and pieces, that they must be understood of him as God-man; for had they been spoken of him singly as God, they are natural to *Christ*, and not at all subjected to God's good will, page 102. But take all these as spoken of *Christ* as ordained to be God-man, all this might indeed be the object of God's decree and the act of his good pleasure, and it was the highest act of grace and God's good pleasure to ordain that man to such an union.

Chapter II. pages 103, 104. *Christ* "is the image of the invisible God," which words are resolved into this assertion, That in that man *Christ Jesus*, by virtue of his union with the godhead, there is inherent a fulness of all divine perfections, which may make up an image of the attributes of the godhead, in so transcendent a way of excellency and eminency, as is incompatible and incommunicable to any mere creature remaining such.

The godhead of *Christ* is as invisible as the godhead of the Father; but *Christ* is such an image as makes the godhead manifest and visible. In *Christ* as man united to the second person, there is a resultant, an edition of the godhead in all the perfections of it. He is the "express image or engraven image, *Heb. i. 3.* The shine, the brightness of his Father's glory;" as the beams of the sun are to the body of the sun, so is *Christ* God's image; and this similitude the apostle there useth and applies it to him as he was man, namely, as he was "appointed heir of all;" which phrase as he is merely the second person might be used of him: Thus *Beza*, *Cameron*, and others have understood it.

This image is such a system or fulness of perfections really inherent and appertaining unto the manhood, by virtue of that it's union with the divine nature; as although infinitely coming short of the attributes that are essential to the godhead, yet is the completest image of them, and such as no mere creature is capable of. This in general may be made out of that parenthesis, in *John i. 14.* "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten Son of God."

Page 105. To give two or three instances of some of these perfections peculiarly, and incommunicably dwelling in the human nature of *Christ*; as wisdom, power, independency, and sovereignty.

1. There is a wisdom in *Christ*'s human nature which is so high an imitation of the attribute of wisdom in God, as no creature, nor all creatures could reach to, nor

have attained; and therefore they, though they be called wise, yet not wisdom, as *Christ* God-man is called, 1 *Cor.* i. 24. And the reason why so transcendent a wisdom is in him as man is given, *Col.* ii. 3. "In *Christ* are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge:" Not objectively only, but subjectively also, as whose knowledge in himself inherent contains in it "all treasures of wisdom. Now the reason of all this fulness of wisdom in *Christ* is there given, verse 9. that "in him dwells the fulness of the godhead bodily."

*Christ* is not omniscient as God is, but it is a similitudinary omniscience, as *Zanthy* calls it, an image of God's omniscience. God's knowledge extends itself not only to all that is made or to be done, but to all that he can make or do; which is an infinity. *Christ*'s human nature, now glorified, knows all that God hath done or meant to do. It had, by virtue of it's union with the divine nature, a right to know both things past, present, and to come; and so it is in a sense a kind of omniscience, incommunicable to any other.

2. The same holds in his power. It is not equal with God's: Yet there is a similitudinary omnipotence in *Christ*'s human nature, both in that he can do whatsoever he will, his will agreeing with God's in every thing, and in that all that God will ever pitch upon to be done he is an instrument of, *Matth.* xxviii. 18. All the businesses of the world run through his hands and his head: and therefore he is called the "power of God," 1 *Cor.* i. 24. and the "arm of the Lord," *Isa.* liii. 1.

*John* v. 19, 20. "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; and whatever the Father doth, the Son doth likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doth." Here we have, 1. That whatever God doth, or means to do, the Son hath a hand in it. 2. That the Son knows all that is done by the Father. Here is both the omniscience we speak of, and the omnipotency, in the terms we stated it, as respecting all God's works, "ad extra," even all that ever was done. And this, 3. in an incommunicable way to any mere creature, for this is given him that he "might be honoured even as the Father is honoured," verse 23. And this, 4. in a similitudinary way, *quousque*, likewise, or in like manner: And, 5. all this *Christ* speaks of himself as the son of man; and it is one of the greatest keys to *John*'s gospel that multitudes of such speeches are spoken of him, both as God, and a God-man. But to put it out of all doubt, he speaks of himself in this discourse as he is the son of man united to God, he himself in the close of all expressly explains it so. Verse 27. "The Father has given the Son authority to execute judgment, because he is the son of man."

3. Another attribute in *Christ*, which is such an image of what is in God as is incommunicable to any mere creatures, is independency and sovereignty. This is one of the chiefest flowers in that crown of his glory. God might annihilate creatures at pleasure, and yet in so doing rob them of nothing, which they can lay a just claim to as their own: but it is not thus with *Christ*'s human nature; now it is assumed into union with the second person, for it is invested with the royal prerogatives of the persons with whom it is one; it hath an independency like unto God's; such as is communicable to no creature: therefore, says *Christ*, verse 26. "As the Father hath life in himself, so he hath given to the Son to have life in himself." It is said to be given him, but by this union he is invested with this indisposible prerogative to have life in himself, and not to hold it by gift, though at first it were obtained so. Indeed it was a free act of grace in God at first, but in doing of it God did a wonder in the world, of all, the greatest: For he sets up an independent creature, a creature backed with such a right to his being, that now himself cannot pull him down, nor.



nor dissolve that union again. And what a glorious image of God's independency is this?

I might shew the like also in holiness and all other attributes; and it is a noble subject to spend pains upon, to set forth and cut out every limb of this vast image of all God's attributes that are in *Christ* merely upon his personal union. I have limbed out only these two or three parts of it, that by the like proportion we might infer the vastness of all the rest.

Chapter III. page 109. "*Christ* is the first-born of every creature:" This is not spoken of him simply as second person only, so as that his eternal generation as Son of God should be only intended; yet it does establish his godhead, for these things could not have been said of him had he not been God. The first-born or first-begotten of every creature is spoken of him as he is admitted into the catalogue or society of the creatures, or as he is become one of them. Or take him as he is the Son of God ordained to human nature, and then to have his name stand highest among the rest of the creatures. It is spoken of him in respect of a dignity and birth-right that this God-man hath at that instant he is admitted amongst the creatures, *Psa.* lxxxix. 27. "I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth," *Prov.* viii. 23. "I was set up from everlasting." The phrase, "I was set up," will less permit us to understand it of his eternal generation, for that was an act of God's will.

Page 113. "For whom all things were created," *Col.* i. 16. *Christ* as God-man is set up as an universal end of the whole creation of God. His person decreed to subsist in man's nature was considered by God to be of that worth and distance above the creatures that their very being and existing was to become absolutely and simply his propriety, of which prerogative no mere creature is capable. Page 114. Suppose God would decree him to be God-man and to subsist in a human nature, and likewise withal would ordain multitudes of other things, viz. Angels and men, &c. then it becomes the necessary due of this *Christ*, and that as God-man, to be set up by God in his decrees as the end of all those things. This did become that man's due and the necessary consequent of that union with God's Son; and accordingly that God should cast his decrees for *Christ*'s glory as well as for his own. Hence we read *Heb.* i. 2. "He is appointed heir of all things."

And if it be affirmed, that then *Christ* needed not to have merited any glory to himself, this surely is a truth, though it may not be made use of to exclude another title unto this his own glory, namely that of purchase; for it is no dishonour to him to have two claims. Page 116. It is certain that all God's works "ad extra," whereof the union of the divine and human nature of *Christ* is one, are the objects of God's decrees, *Col.* i. 19. "It pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell in him." And again, *Psa.* ii. 6, 7. "I will publish the decree, I have set my king on my holy hill of *Zion*: And upon this decree his kingdom over all is his due and inheritance.

Chapter IV. page 120. This human nature is made God's fellow, as *Zechariah* calls him, *Zeck.* xiii. 7. "The man, God's fellow," is advanced to a fellowship in this society of the trinity, and therefore to him God communicates proportionably without measure, as *John* iii. 34. Page 121. By means of taking up one reasonable creature, a man, into this highest union, he communicates the riches of his knowledge and wisdom, to the utmost that they are communicable to that creature so united; for it is his due to know more at the first instant of that his union than

all the angels: For by virtue of that union he is presently in his Father's bosom, *John* i. 18. "The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." God can hide nothing from him which he means to do; he draws nearer to God infinitely than *Moses* did, or angels ever did or shall.

Chapter V. Wherein the doctor shews, that the glory which *Christ*, as God-man, had assigned him before the world was in his election by the Father signified in *John* xvii. 5. "Glorify me now with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Page 124. It is not the glory of the second person simply or alone considered, for this was not a thing to be prayed for, it is naturally and essentially his due; and he had it as much now at the time when he prayed as he had from everlasting: The word, "Now glorify me," necessarily implies a suspension of a glory due before; and it argues a glory to be given in time; for both which reasons it concerns the human nature, not the divine. The subject of the glory prayed for is the man. *Austin* was convinced of this, though he was engaged against the *arians* as much as any in his time. It is the man, or rather the person of God-man in union together is rather the subject prayed for: It is the petition of the person who had been humbled, who had glorified God on earth, and had finished his work and waited for this glory until now; and it is a glory suspended until this work was done. This will never be unriddled, says the doctor, page 126. so fairly any other way, as by predestination, that is, the glory he was ordained to, as God-man; for he had before the world was, the title of God-man elect, although not of God-man united, or made flesh. He bore the title and repute of it, and went under that name with God the Father. Verse 24. is explained to the same purpose, and must be interpreted of *Christ* as God-man, when he says, "The glory which thou gavest me, for thou lovedst me from the foundation of the world."

Chapter VI. page 151. The author declares that *Christ* being the second person did bear and sustain the glory of being God-man, all along from his predestination thereunto, and as an officer elect, he hath the title and honour accordingly, and had the glory of it before his Father.

When he appeared to the patriarchs, and was with the people of God in the wilderness, and appeared as captain of the host of *Israel*, these acts were done as bearing the personage of God-man, and all along from everlasting he acted as such in that capacity together with his Father.

*Isa.* ix. 6. One of his names is the everlasting Father, that is, a Father from everlasting, and therefore he must be said to have born that relation of a Father to us from that time. In the trinity, take them considered as mere persons, there is but one Father; therefore this title must be given to *Christ* in God's decrees, upon the consideration of his being God-man in his undertaking and acting accordingly. *Paul* tells us, *Heb.* ii. that *Christ* is a Father considered as he is a man, verse 13. "Lo I, and the children thou hast given me." And *Isaiab* tells us he was this from everlasting, before he actually assumed the same nature: He must be the everlasting Father, representatively, by bearing the personage of God-man, afore his Father, and undertaking that relation.

Chapter X. page 173. *Col.* i. 16. "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, &c. all things were created by him and for him." Page



Page 177. His subserviency to God in the creation is set forth here in three particles, *in auctore* in him, *in ministro* by him, and *in materia* for him.

1. In him, as the exemplary cause; that is God set up *Christ* as the pattern of all perfection; for so that human nature united and quickened by the godhead, must needs be even above the angels themselves; and he drew in scattered pieces in the rest of the creation, the several perfections met in that human nature as a pattern. And in man's creation this seems to have been considered by God in that speech, "Let us make man according to our image;" that is, after that man who was to be united to God, whom we in our decrees have set up as the pattern and express image of the invisible godhead.

2. "By him all things were created;" he having been some way the instrument of the creation as he is *Christ* God-man anointed, as well as he is actually of redemption. And page 168. *Christ* is the medium of God's creation. Page 178. If he were at all to be made a creature, it was his due personal privilege to have been himself first made, and to have been God's instrument in creation, and to have uttered those words which were spoken by God, "Let there be light, let there be sun, moon, &c." even as it was his due when he assumed our nature, to have been filled with all that personal glory which he hath now in heaven. But for the accomplishment of other ends this was suspended, namely, that he might first become sin and a curse for us; so I say, it was his due to have existed in his human nature first, and then as God's word and instrument, he should have created all things, as he wrought miracles when he was here on earth; and though it was suspended for glorious ends, yet God gives him the glory of creation virtually, that he created all things by him, and by virtue of his incarnation. And in creating, to shew that he should have done it as his Logos, or Word to be made flesh, he accordingly acts his part, as in *Gen. i. 3*. "God said, let there be light," which but for this very mystery needed not have been. Yea such seems to have been his subserviency to God herein, that *John* contents not himself only to have said, that "all things were made by him;" but further adds, "without him nothing was made that was made."

Chapter XI. page 180. *Christ* as God-man is the Creator of all things, proved by *1 Cor. viii. 6*. "One Lord *Jesus Christ*, by whom are all things," page 181. This is not attributed to him as man, singly considered; nor is it a property of God considered singly as God only, but as a man who was one person with God, or God-man; nor are these things attributed to him merely by way of communication of properties, whereby what was proper only to the divine nature is attributed to the manhood; but these all by way of influence and virtual efficacy, are attributed to him as God-man, as truly as the works of redemption, mediation, &c.

Page 183. His being appointed Lord, will send us to a higher date than his actual ascension to heaven, even to afore the creation; yea, even to eternity, *Heb. i. 2*. "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds:" Yea, and because as God-man, he was appointed Lord of them, therefore it was also that God commissioned him to make them, considered as God-man, to make his title of lordship even as son of man proper and direct, and adequately full to him, and there needs no more to verify this, viz. that as God-man he made the worlds, and virtually as man, as well as efficiently, both as God and man in the sense it hath been explained in.

Chapter XII. page 184. That *Christ*, as God-man, is the Creator of all things, is further proved from *John* i. 1, 2, 3. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, &c." This name "the Word of God" imports both his being the image of God the Father, as the second person, and the image or manifestation of God to us in human nature. Many of our protestant divines have altogether declined the first sense and betaken themselves to the latter, viz. That *Christ* is called the Word, in relation to his being manifested in a human nature, and therein to manifest the whole of God unto us. This is not appropriated to him only as the Son of God and second person; but as united to human nature, *Rev.* xix. 13. "He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God." Page 187. That repetition in the second verse, viz. *John* i. 2. "The same was in the beginning with God" imports that the second person did then sustain, and take on him another relation, even the person of the mediator, and enter upon the office, acting the part and sustaining the place and reputation of it.

Page 189. Compare this with *Prov.* viii. 22. and the titles, the Word and wisdom are in effect and significancy the same in the original languages. *Solomon* speaks but the same things of him there that *John* doth here: "The Word was with God in the beginning, that is, the Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, I was by him rejoicing before him;" and so it may explain what is meant by the beginning here, namely, the beginning of creation, and therefore is not meant of his eternal generation; for so *Christ* is not the beginning of God's ways, for the ways of God are his goings forth toward his creatures. That speech is all one with *Col.* i. 15. "The first-born of every creature," being in God's decree of creation the first, the corner stone, and beginning of the rest, so as it must be meant of *Christ*, as God-man.

Page 190. We find, *1 Cor.* i. 24. that *Christ* is said to be "the power of God, and the wisdom of God;" both which are spoken of him, not as they are essential attributes in God's nature; for the person of *Christ*, as a person, is distinct from the attributes, which are common to all three; and so, he is not styled the attribute of wisdom, but they are thus spoken of *Christ* manifestatively, and instrumentally, and executively, and as he is from God, and made use of by God towards us, and in things that concern us, to be the whole scene and manifestation of God's wisdom, and "substratum" of his counsels concerning us. And so also the executive power by whom God effects all he doth, That observation evidently demonstrates this, which *Cameron*, and many others, have made, by comparing *Moses*, *Gen.* i. and this first of *John* together, which many things parallel lead to: That whereas *Moses* in the creation mentions God the Father and the Spirit, two of the persons, yet he veils the Son under that so often repeated speech used of the creation, that, God said, "Let there be light;" God said, "Let there be a firmament," which could not be without mystery; and what other mystery could it be, than that *Christ* was that Word by whom God created all things? When therefore *Christ* is termed the Word of God, the meaning is, he is the power of God, in being his instrument and agent in all he doth, or means to do.

Page 191. Thus God elected us and bestowed all things upon us before the world was, even in *Jesus Christ*, *Ephes.* i. 4. as then bearing this person of God-man. And thus all the promises which the written word of God contains, were made for us unto *Christ*, as really bearing that person; and *2 Tim.* i. 9. "They were given



ven us in *Christ* before the world began." Notable to this purpose is that place *Tit. i. 2, 3.* where the apostle first says, "That God promised eternal life before the world began." A promise is a word given forth, and is more than a purpose with one's self; for it is to another: There was a promise made to *Christ* as then with God. Now merely as second person, he is capable of no promises, but only as he is God-man. It is the Son of God as he is "*Jesus Christ*, in whom all promises are, yea, and amen," *2 Cor. i. 19, 20.*

Page 192. When God came to make creatures, he did it by *Jesus Christ*, as sustaining this person of God-man, *Eph. iii. 9.* "God created all things by *Jesus Christ*;" and *John* adds, "Nothing was made without him that was made;" merely to shew the instrumental general dependence God had of him in this work: He was all in all, as we say of one that is a right hand to another; he does nothing without him: Such was *Christ* to God; not that God had not power essential to have created without him; for it is by that power that *Christ* did it; but that this power, God's will, would never have put forth, but for his assuming to be God-man.

Chapter XIII. page 197. *Christ* God-man is subservient to God in all the works of his providence; he upholds and supports all things; he governs the world, and he shall judge it.

First, "For the upholding all things." That is evident in this text of *Col. i. 17.* "By him do all things consist;" he is the corner-stone that keeps the building and all the parts of it together, *Heb. i. 2, 3.* it is said, "He upholds all things, by the word of his power," and it is spoken of him not simply considered as a second person, but as God-man, for so he is heir appointed.

Secondly, Whilst the world stands, he governs it, easeth God of that burthen, and is his prorex for him: "All judgment is committed to the Son," *John v. 22.* "For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:" "And the government is upon his shoulders," *Isa. ix. 6.* And then,

Thirdly, When he hath thus governed the world with a greater advantage unto God, then this man *Christ Jesus* will judge it also at the last, and give all men their accounts, *Acts xvii. 31.* "He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world,—by that man whom he hath ordained." God would not employ a mere creature in this work, it was too great a honour; and yet it was meet it should be done visibly and audibly, and to the satisfaction of all men's consciences, both concerning themselves and others. God would have a person in the trinity manifest in a creature like unto us to do it, armed with power and authority, because he is God; and yet a man that should deal with creatures in their own way; in a rational and audible way convince them, and visibly sentence them, so as they should be able to see and hear their judge as man, and yet fear and dread him as being God. And this is a high and great service, which *Christ* as man shall do for God; for a man in a vocal manner to be able to clear the accounts of the world, which, how entangled are they! And punctually to give every man his due in righteousness! A man, that shall be able to convince all God's enemies of all their hard speeches they have spoken against him, as *Enoch* the seventh from *Adam* prophesied; *Jude* verse 14. able to give a full and satisfactory account of all God's ways and proceedings, which men cavil at; to justify God's decrees, which men quarrel with, and think much at; and his children whom men despise and bear down: One able to bring to light the secrets of all hearts, so as all men shall judge of every man, *1 Cor. iv. 5.* "Therefore judge

judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: And then shall every man have praise of God." One able to search the deep things of God and bring forth his counsels, for the "books are then opened," *Rev. xx. 12.*

Lastly, After all this, *Christ* is the "founder of that other world into which he brings his children." That personal fulness that is in God-man is reserved by God as a subject of that depth and glory to take up, together with his own perfections, the thoughts of men and angels for ever, *Rev. xxi. 23.* "That city had no need of the sun nor moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it and the lamb is the light thereof." When those two great volumes, this of his word, and that of his world, which now in this life are put into our hands, to read the characters of his glory in by faith, when both these shall be folded up and clean laid aside, then will the person of *Christ*, God-man, be set forth to us, to entertain us for ever with the sight of the glory of God in the face of *Christ*.

Having drawn out this little abridgement of this excellent treatise, I take the freedom to make these few remarks on it.

Remark I. This learned and pious author plainly manifests that he could not expound several scriptures which speak of *Christ* both in the old testament and the new, without taking in his human nature to be the joint subject of such ascriptions, because there are so many things expressed in them below the dignity of godhead: And therefore he supposes the human nature of *Christ* to exist in the view or idea of the Father from everlasting, and to have all those glorious actions and characters ascribed to him as man united to God, or as God united to man. And it is to be observed, that he does this not in one sentence or two, or in one page or two, but it is the chief design of that whole discourse of the "glories and royalties that belong to *Jesus Christ* considered as God-man," which fills up more than a hundred pages in folio.

Remark II. He supposes the man *Christ Jesus* not only to have an existence in the divine idea through all the various antient transactions of creation, providence, &c. But he asserts that he ought actually to have existed the first of all creatures, and to have been as it were an under-agent in the creation of the world; but that this actual glory was suspended for four thousand years, merely because he was to bear sin and the curse for the redemption of men.

Remark III. He rises much higher in his ascriptions to the man *Jesus Christ*, than I have dared to do in any part of my discourse, and invests him with much more sublime powers than any angelic spirit; and yet he supposes his soul to be a human soul still, and calls him a man: He gives him most illustrious prerogative, on the account of his virtual union to his divine nature, all which he asserts to be his early due had he actually then existed.

Remark IV. The actual pre-existence of the man *Jesus*, or the human soul of *Christ*, and his actual union to his divine nature can never withhold or diminish any of those sublime characters, those illustrious honours or prerogatives which this author saith were his due, had he then existed, and which he supposes to be attributed to him in scripture by the figure prolepsis, and by way of anticipation, and which were given him by God the Father, as supposing him then to exist in his idea long before his actual existence.

Remark V. The exposition of all these scriptures will appear much more natural, easy and plain by the doctrine of the actual pre-existence of the soul of *Christ*, than by the mere decree of his existence or supposition of it only in the idea and fore-knowledge of God. In the proleptical sense, only learned men can find the meaning of



of them. In this sense of actual existence, the meanest christian may read and understand what he reads. And it is a general rule among divines for the interpretation of scripture, never to introduce figures of speech, nor to explain the word of God in a figurative sense, but where the plain obvious literal sense has something in it inconsistent or improper.

Remark VI. There is not one scripture in all the bible which denies the actual existence of *Christ's* human soul before the foundation of the world, but there are many which in this author's judgment cannot be explained without the supposition of his virtual existence then in the idea of God, and therefore they are supposed to be spoken of him as though he did actually exist by the help of tropes and figures.

Now I leave it to the judgment of any candid reader, whether those scriptures which are written for the use of the unlearned, ought not much rather to be explained in their most easy and obvious sense, than to spread so many and such hard figures of speech almost all over the bible, the old testament and the new, without evident necessity : and it is very reasonable to believe, that had this evangelical writer lived in an age when the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul of *Christ* had been freely proposed to the world, he would have imbraced it with great readiness and pleasure.

Remark VII. Though these more elevated sentiments and bolder expressions, which I have cited from so great an author, are by no means a standard of truth, nor indeed can I follow him in some of these sublimities, neither do I cite his magnificent expressions concerning the man *Jesus Christ*, nor his expositions of scripture as a sufficient proof of what I have advanced ; yet it will appear to the world by this collection, that I have not ventured upon such expositions of the bible, nor such exalted sentiments and language concerning *Christ's* human nature, without a honourable precedent. If I am mistaken, yet I may reasonably hope that while I have erred and wandered under such a leader, and in so good company, the censure will be but light and gentle, since most of the reproaches which may be cast on me on this account will fall heavy on this venerable author, whose name has been honourable, and his praise great among the churches.

The END of the LAST VOLUME.

